

U.S., Iran hold 'secret talks'

BEIRUT (R) — The United States and Iran have held secret talks on releasing eight American hostages held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon, a senior Middle East official told Reuters Wednesday. The official, who asked not to be identified, said senior Iranian Foreign Ministry officials and an American negotiator met in New York in December. A second round of talks took place in Geneva in January. He also said British envoy visited Tehran recently to seek the release of four British hostages who are among 17 Westerners held in Lebanon. He added that no agreement was expected between London and Tehran before the row was settled over British author Salman Rushdie and Iran's death order against him for allegedly blaspheming Islam. Both the United States and Iran discussed the possibility of normalising relations and freeing the American hostages, eight of 17 Westerners missing and believed kidnapped in Lebanon.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي

Beirut clerics propose peace plan

BEIRUT (AP) — Rival Christian forces duelled with mortars and machine guns in east Beirut Wednesday as their religious leaders demanded an immediate ceasefire in the one-month showdown. Police did not report any casualties from the intermittent exchange that covered Akrafieh, held by the Lebanese Forces militia under Samir Geagea, and the city's southern edge, controlled by army General Michel Aoun's troops. A three-hour meeting by spiritual leaders of various Christian sects called for a respected cease-fire, the withdrawal of the rival forces to their garrisons, respecting all roads, ending the vitriolic propaganda campaign, and returning life to normal. The conference, who met at the seat of Maronite Catholic Patriarch Nasrallah Stair in Bkirk, north of Beirut, called for the implementation of a political dialogue between Aoun and Geagea and the implementation of the security arrangements. Geagea vowed in a starry statement to comply with the clerics' peace plan and said he hoped Aoun would do the same. "We hope that a similar decision will be taken by the other side and that the spiritual leaders will directly supervise the conduct of the plan," Geagea said. There was no immediate reaction from Aoun.

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Regent meets sports officials, team

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday met with executive committee members of the Tae-Kwon-Do and Karate Federation and listened to their views and urged them to exert further efforts in order to develop these games and further promote their standard. The Crown Prince also met with the Jordan national team that won the Arab Cooperation Council marathon championship held in Baghdad and congratulated the winners.

U.N. revives Gulf peace bid

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is to contact Iran and Iraq to propose a two-month session of direct talks aimed at clearing the way for a permanent peace settlement between them. Perez de Cuellar outlined his proposal for another round of Iran-Iraq talks during private Security Council consultations on Tuesday, but refused to provide details or a timetable. The 15-member Security Council issued a statement expressing support for Perez de Cuellar's efforts to restart the negotiations that bogged down in August 1988 soon after they began in Geneva. Perez de Cuellar and his special envoy, Swedish Ambassador Jan K. Eliasson, have been unsuccessful in efforts to break the deadlock.

Gandhi party heads for defeat

NEW DELHI (R) — Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party appeared headed for a crushing defeat Wednesday in state elections marred by vote-rigging and widespread violence that killed nearly 100 people (see page 8). Votes were cast on Tuesday for eight of the country's 25 state assemblies. Early voting trends showed Gandhi's party, which controlled all eight states, was being routed.

Managua decrees ceasefire

MANAGUA (R) — Nicaragua's Sandinista government ordered an immediate ceasefire in the war with the U.S.-backed contras Wednesday, adding to the pressure to disband the rebel forces. "The president of the republic has decided to order from today a unilateral halt to offensive military operations with the aim that the counter-revolutionary forces demobilise immediately," said a statement from President Daniel Ortega's office broadcast on pro-government Voice of Nicaragua radio. Ortega, whose leftist Sandinistas were crushed in Sunday's polls, has made clear that disbanding contra forces based in Honduras is a key condition for a peaceful transition to the new government on April 25 (see page 8).

Israeli devalues shekel

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli shekel will be devalued by around six per cent, effective on March 1, to boost the economy and curb inflation, Finance Minister Shimon Peres announced Wednesday. He said that at the start of business on Friday the shekel would be pegged at 2.188 per cent unit of a dollar-dominated basket of currencies. Its exchange rate against individual currencies would be fixed later in the day, he said. Israel's last devaluation was in June 1989, when the shekel was devalued by 4.2 per cent to 2.014 to the dollar.

Washington mayor pleads not guilty

WASHINGTON (R) — The mayor of Washington, Marion Barry, pleaded not guilty Wednesday in federal court here to eight drug-related criminal charges. U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Jackson set June 4 for a trial date after Barry's lawyer R. Kenneth Mundy entered the pleas for the mayor to five charges of cocaine use in 1986 and 1989 and three charges of lying to a federal grand jury that he never used drugs.

King arrives in Abu Dhabi

Jordan and Qatar call for Arab summit on Soviet immigration

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Wednesday as part of a Gulf tour to discuss bilateral relations, the latest developments in the region and means to arrive at a unified Arab response to the exodus of Soviet Jews to Israel.

Just before the King arrived from Qatar, Moscow's ambassador to the UAE assured Arabs the Soviet Union would work to prevent the Jewish emigration from settling in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A Qatari official said King Hussein and Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani had called Wednesday for an urgent Arab summit on the influx of Soviet Jews to Israel.

The Qatari News Agency (QNA) quoted the official as saying they wanted the meeting to adopt a "serious and effective position that responds to the present dangers."

Sheikh Khalifa told King Hussein that the leaders of France and Britain support the Arab stand against the influx of Soviet Jews into Israel, the news agency said.

The agency, quoting a high-level Qatari official, said Sheikh Khalifa communicated the outcome of his talks with French President Francois Mitterrand and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher particularly on the issue of Soviet Jewish immigration.

The Emir "relayed to His Majesty their understanding and support of the Arab point of view," added the source.

The Saudi newspaper Al Sharq Al Aswat quoted sources in Cairo on Tuesday as saying the summit could follow Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's visit to Moscow on March 19 to discuss the Arab concern with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

The official UAE news agency WAM said Ambassador Felix Fedotov had visited UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Rashid Abdullah Al Nuaimi to affirm that Moscow would cooperate with Arab states to prevent a settlement in the occupied lands.

The Qatari official did not give a date for the summit which would be the first meeting of the heads of state of the 22-member Arab League since last August.

The Qatari News Agency said King Hussein and Sheikh Khalifa accused Israel of planning to settle Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"This illegal act is bound to seriously complicate efforts to reach a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Middle East issue and represents an aggression on Palestinian rights and a threat to national Arab security," the agency, received in Cyprus, quoted the official as saying.

Israel expects up to half a million Soviet Jews to arrive in the country in the next five years.

The King, who is accompanied by Prime Minister Murad Badran, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem, was received upon arrival here by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan and senior officials.

Palestinians strike to protest closure of universities

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians in Arab Jerusalem and the West Bank and Gaza Strip held a general strike Wednesday to protest at Israel's continued closure of Palestinian universities.

Ignoring Arab and Western protests, Israel announced on Tuesday that it would keep the six universities in the occupied territories closed for at least three more months. They were shut shortly after the Palestinian uprising erupted in December 1987.

Israel gave permission to 14 community colleges in the West Bank to resume classes.

Palestinians said merchants kept their shops closed and transport came to a halt in accordance with the strike call by underground leaders of the uprising.

Hundreds of Palestinians in a West Bank village trampled, kicked and beat to death an Arab suspected of collaborating with Israel, residents said on Wednesday.

The killing of Ali Asad Nasarrah, 42, on Tuesday in Beit Furik village near Nablus city was the second reported mob lynching in the 26-month-old revolt against Israeli occupation.

Residents said masked men carrying knives and axes abducted Nasarrah, banished from Beit Furik in 1969 on suspicion he helped Israeli authorities, while he was in the village visiting an aunt.

On Tuesday, about 200 Palestinian youths were detained by Israeli troops in the West Bank town of Ramallah after a fire-

bomb was thrown at a parked car, reports said. The car, which had Israeli licence plates, was not damaged, they said.

Military officials who insisted on anonymity confirmed the incident but declined to say how many youths were taken into custody.

Several hundred students staged sit-down demonstrations outside three offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to protest continued Israeli closure of Palestinian universities.

The protests in Arab Jerusalem and Ramallah passed without incident, authorities said. The demonstration in Bethlehem was

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Arab American concerns are heard in Congress, says Dole

By Rosalind Mandine

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Arab Americans are getting their voices heard and are changing attitudes about issues of concern to their community in the U.S. Congress, Senator Robert Dole told the eighth annual National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) lobbying campaign and political action conference Tuesday.

"I believe you've made this much progress — the issues of your special concern are finally beginning to show up on scopes around Capitol Hill and around Washington," Dole told NAAA participants in a luncheon address. Dole is a Republican from Kansas and the Senate minority leader.

Conference participants spent the day on Capitol Hill lobbying members of Congress and their staff on issues of concern.

In his address, Dole discussed foreign aid, Lebanon and the peace process — issues NAAA participants highlighted in their other meetings as well.

Dole reaffirmed his proposal to cut levels of foreign aid to earmarked countries, such as Israel and Egypt, by five per cent. "I hope that those of you who might see merit in what I have suggested will be active and aggressive in making your views known," he said.

On the peace process, Dole said, "It is time for all parties to quit stalling and nit-picking... and start negotiating... we have negotiations and elections all

over the world — must the Middle East be last?"

Dole stressed that the United States "must see Lebanon as an important focus of our security attention — and not just a 'side-show' to a broader Middle East settlement." Dole said he supports the appointment of a special envoy to Lebanon and a call for the removal of all foreign forces from Lebanon.

Other members of Congress who attended the lunch included: Representatives Mary Rose Oakar, Democrat from Ohio; Nick Joe Rahall, Democrat from West Virginia; David Obey, Democrat from Wisconsin; Gerald Solomon, Republican from New York; Sherwood

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Mandela: No early concessions

LUSAKA (Agencies) — Nelson Mandela Wednesday ruled out early concessions by the African National Congress (ANC) to help President F.W. de Klerk fight off a right-wing backlash against reform of apartheid in South Africa.

Mandela, speaking at a news conference, rejected a suggestion by his host President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia that the ANC should help Klerk by suspending armed operations inside South Africa, although the ANC has in fact been quiet on that front for some time.

Kaunda, who welcomed Mandela to Lusaka Tuesday for a week of talks with foreign leaders

and the exiled ANC, said de Klerk had to contend with a "innate right-wing fringe" opposed to reform, and needed the gesture.

But Mandela gave a courteous and firm refusal, arguing that De Klerk's government, which unbanned the ANC Feb. 2, had not yet met the ANC's preconditions for talks.

"The simple position is that until South Africa complies with the preconditions we have set the ANC is not in the same position as the national party," he told reporters after meeting with seven African presidents and Commonwealth leaders in Lusaka.

Flanked by Kaunda, he said whatever political or security problems the government faced in South Africa, the ANC "cannot be expected to make any concessions."

Mandela is in Zambia to confer with exiled ANC leaders at their external headquarters.

The veteran nationalist reiterated that the ANC was demanding the lifting of the state of emergency, the release of all political prisoners and a general amnesty for exiles selected to take part in preliminary talks with de Klerk.

He said exiles the ANC wanted

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Sagr Al Urdun and its crew

Jordanian entry wins air race

PARIS (Agencies) — Sagr Al Urdun (Falcon of Jordan) the Royal Jordanian aircraft, has won the Malaysia International Air Race 1990. Its crew will receive a cash prize of 100,000 French francs at a ceremony to be held in Paris.

The race from Paris to Malaysia and back to the French capital began last month and was conducted in stages, with Sagr Al Urdun nearly always in the lead. The Amman-Paris stage which was launched Tuesday involved participating crews and craft from Jordan and 10 other countries.

Upon landing in Paris the Jordanian crew were met by Her Majesty Queen Noor, Royal Jordanian Director General Husam Abu Ghazaleh and His Majesty King Hussein's advisor on Tourism and Civil Aviation Affairs Ali

Ghandour. Immediately after the announcement of the result of the race, His Majesty King Hussein sent a cable to the crew congratulating them on their success. The King said that he was deeply proud of the achievement and expressed appreciation for efforts made by the organisers and those who provided assistance to the crew, including RJ staff, the Arab Wings and the Royal Falcons.

The King said that the world would remember that Jordan took part in this race for the first time and achieved a great result.

The flight from Amman to Paris was described by Captain Eric Ledger as hectic since the craft encountered high winds and storms, specially over Italy and Switzerland. Ledger described the climatic

condition in Europe at the time as a real nightmare, forcing the plane to land in Geneva for some time for refuelling. Despite the delays, he said, Sagr Al Urdun achieved victory. Upon leaving Amman for Paris Sagr Al Urdun was in the lead by two hours and 30 minutes.

When Sagr Al Urdun stopped in Amman, its crew were visited by King Hussein who also met with members of an international commission which organised the race. While in Jordan the crews of other aircraft taking part in the race were taken on a tourist trip to archaeological and tourist sites.

A press statement released in Amman Wednesday said that a press conference will be held Friday at Amman airport at which the crew of the winning craft will discuss the various stages of the race.

Peres doubts Shamir can accept U.S. proposals

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Vice-Premier Shimon Peres said Wednesday he doubts whether Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, facing stiff resistance within his right-wing Likud bloc, can accept U.S.-backed compromises aimed at starting talks with Palestinians.

Peres, head of the Labour Party, spoke in an interview with the Associated Press amid a widening rebellion against Shamir among Likud hardliners.

Former Industry Minister Ariel Sharon, who quit the cabinet two weeks ago to protest Shamir's policies, has threatened to convene Likud's decision-making central committee next week without the prime minister's consent.

Other Likud legislators said they would support a vote of no confidence against Shamir in parliament if he agrees to a U.S.-backed formula that would involve Palestinians from Arab Jerusalem or expelled Palestinians in peace talks.

Asked if he thought Shamir could overcome the differences and move Middle East peace efforts ahead by accepting compromises proposed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Peres said: "I have my doubts."

Baker has been attempting to bridge differences between Israel and Palestinians over the com-

position of a Palestinian delegation for preliminary talks in Cairo.

The talks are to focus on Israel's plan for elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip that would lead to limited self-rule for 1.7 million Palestinians in the occupied lands.

Peres, whose party agrees to Baker's suggestions, has given Shamir a March 7 deadline to approve them.

"We are nearing the real decision now," Peres said. "In a week or so we shall see what is happening."

He described the current crisis as "more serious than previous ones" and added: "From the Likud point of view, they have reached the point where they have to make up their mind."

Peres indicated that Labour would leave its coalition with Likud and try to form a new government with smaller religious and left-wing parties if Likud continues to balk at peace efforts.

Asked whether he was ready to form a new cabinet, Peres said, "Maybe, I don't exclude it."

The Hadasot daily quoted Peres as telling party activists Tuesday that he could put together a narrow government

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House panel completes Yarmouk investigations

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — A committee of the Lower House of Parliament has completed its investigations into student clashes which occurred at Yarmouk University late last year and will present its report to the full House in 10 days, according to the committee's chairman, Fares Al Nabulsi.

Nabulsi, a deputy from Amman, told the Jordan Times that the committee visited the university campus Wednesday and met with University President Ali Mahafza and took testimony from students.

Meanwhile, the financial committee of the House met Wednesday and formed a sub-committee to conduct a full investigation into Jordan's debts as well as corruption in the Kingdom, the Jordan News Agency, Petra reported.

The committee will conduct a probe and submit a report and will also suggest recommendations, it said.

The meeting of the Financial Committee came one day after the House held a closed session for a close scrutiny of the committee's work. The committee came under criticism during the session for its failure to achieve progress



Fares Al Nabulsi

in the task of investigating the Kingdom's economic crisis which surfaced in 1988, according to informed sources.

The sources said the committee was given a two-week period to present a report on its findings to the full House.

The Upper House of Parliament said Wednesday its Financial Committee would meet Sunday to discuss Jordan's loan agreements and the 1990 budget, which was referred to it after approval by the Lower House earlier this month.

The Lower House will meet Saturday under the chairmanship of its speaker, Suleiman Arar, "to discuss several important issues," Petra said. The agency added that Cabinet ministers were expected to be present at the session.

Jordan begins exports of flowers

By Mariam M. Shabhin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The first shipment of Jordanian-produced cut flowers to the Federal Republic of Germany was flown to Cologne Tuesday as Jordanian agricultural and flower producers stepped up an intensive campaign to export their goods to the European Community (EC).

A container of fresh cut flowers, most of which are presently out of season in other flower producing countries, was loaded on to a Royal Jordanian carrier marking the first time the Kingdom has exported flowers to West Germany, according to Mohammad Awamleh, of the Cut Flowers Producers Cooperative Association.

"There have been individual efforts in the past to export Jordanian flowers to EC coun-

tries, but this time it is a combined effort," Awamleh told the Jordan Times. "After attending the Green Week in Berlin in February, a lot of contacts were made and possibilities for exports studied... as far as export of fresh cut flowers is concerned this is the first move we have made since coming back from Germany," he added.

Seven types of flowers made up the flower shipment. They were carnations, freesia, gypsophilla, gladiola, saphendar, cynara and amaranth. Awamleh explained that each type of flower could have variations depending on where they are grown. "Right now, we want to create a demand for our flowers simply by putting them on the market," he said.

Awamleh admitted that actual profits on the first few shipments could be minimal but stressed that the

"important thing is to get our flowers on big international markets, so that the importers can develop a taste for them."

He said that the air freight charged by Royal Jordanian was JD 1.100 per kilo because their shipment had failed to meet the minimum required weight of 45 kilograms for air freight by the airliner.

"Our shipment was approximately 22 kilos and thus did not meet the basic requirement. Had we met the requirement the freight should have been JD 0.320 per kilo," Awamleh said.

Another consignment of fresh cut flowers is awaiting approval from Stockholm for shipment, according to Awamleh.

Israel, which, according to some flower growers, has less land available to grow flowers than Jordan, exports approx-

imately \$55 million worth of cut flowers to the EC countries every year. Informed sources say that this year that figure could go up to \$120 million.

Vegetable, fruit exports

While fresh flowers are one concern of Jordanian exporters, fruits and vegetables are another. Jordanian exporters are expected to deliver four containers of Jordanian produce within the next month, according to Awamleh, who is also head of the marketing extension department of the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO).

"We are awaiting the transport of four containers of vegetables — three with tomatoes and one with mixed vegetables — in March," Awamleh said.

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Damascus rules out East European-style changes

DAMASCUS (R) — President Hafez Al Assad has ruled out any East European-style political and economic changes for Syria and said it would continue to develop its own brand of socialism.

In his first comments on the winds of change sweeping Eastern Europe, Assad told a group of retiring parliamentarians that "socialism is not intended to oppress others. It is intended to remove oppression from the oppressed."

"I do not want to say that we are practicing the freedoms we want. We always want more," he said.

"We do not do anything because others are doing it. We do it when we are convinced that it reflects our belief and benefits our people... we do not do anything under the pressure of certain circumstances or at the suggestion of anyone."

But he said he wished the countries of Eastern Europe well and hoped relations with them would remain strong.

Assad's comments to deputies

who ended their four-year term Monday were carried by Syria's official news agency and reported Wednesday in local newspapers.

Moscow's staunchest Arab ally and a strong opponent of Israel, Assad, 59, has wielded power in Syria with an iron fist since taking over the country in a bloodless coup in 1970. He has also made Damascus a key factor in any eventual Middle East settlement.

The president said Syria's ties with the Soviet Union, its main arms supplier, were strong and unchanged.

"I want to confirm that everything between us and the Soviet Union is going on with the spirit of friendship and strong ties, which you know was existing for many years."

Some Western diplomats in the Middle East, however, expect Moscow to cut back its aid to Assad's clients as political and economic restructuring takes effect at home.

Assad told the deputies that if Syria had bent to internal or external pressures, this would

have happened long ago.

"We searched and will continue to search for improvements and to benefit from the experiences of other peoples. But we take our circumstances into consideration and act according to our will and choice."

"We will develop what we feel needs to be developed and what we feel will benefit our people and country," he said.

Diplomats said a congress in March or early April of Assad's Baath Arab Socialist Party would discuss how to develop the Baath led five-party ruling coalition to give more say to other parties.

Referring to the country's economic structure, Assad said Syria had three sectors, the public, the private and the joint public-private sectors.

"...we will continue to encourage these three sectors and there is an urgent need to rally all our people's resources in serving the development of this country," he said.

"We built a political party and popular system which we are



Hafez Al Assad

Algeria silent over steps to free hostages

ALGIERS (AP) — The government refused to disclose what steps it might be taking Wednesday in connection with the release of foreign hostages held in Lebanon.

"We are always ready to do as much work as we did in the past for the release of hostages, provided both parties are in agreement," a government spokesman said on condition of anonymity.

Success in any negotiations requires secrecy, the spokesman said, and decided to confirm a newspaper report that contacts are under way to win the release of the 18 captives.

The leading Arab newspaper Al Hayat, published in London, reported Tuesday that discussion between the United States, Iran and Syria aimed at freeing the hostages have been making progress.

The Lebanese newspaper said the high-level contacts in Geneva between U.S. and Iranian officials had made "positive results."

The newspaper quoted Algerian sources as saying that contacts were in place through non-diplomatic organizations and that Algeria was helping in the process.

In Washington, the White House and State Department denied reports of secret talks in Geneva, which have surfaced before.

But White House Press Secretary Martin Fitzwater did not rule out that the hostage issue was under discussion, stressing there were no face-to-face negotiations.

Algeria played a leading role in negotiations between the United States and Iran for the release in 1981 of the 52 American hostages held at the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

One of the junior officials in those negotiations was Robert Ross, now the U.S. ambassador to Algeria. On Wednesday, he met his usual practice of refusing to comment on the hostage situation.

The 18 captives are believed held by groups loyal to Hizbollah, a radical Shiite Muslim organization with strong ties to Iran. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and others have said that the key to any hostage release lies in Tehran.

Al Hayat quoted unidentified political, militia and religious sources in Beirut as saying that Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani had convinced the groups

holding the captives that the time has come to release them.

The hostages include Terry Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press, and Terry Waite, special envoy of Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, who was kidnapped while trying to win the release of other captives.

In all, eight Americans, four Britons, two West Germans, two Swiss, an Italian and an Irishman are believed held hostage in Lebanon.

Anderson, the longest-held of the captives, was kidnapped in Beirut on March 16, 1985.

Last month, a Kuwaiti newspaper, Al Qabas, said "an American personality" had met in Geneva with a representative of Rafsanjani to discuss the hostage issue. None of those supposedly involved was identified.

"France promised money for hostages"

Meanwhile the French newspaper Liberation reported Wednesday that the French government apparently reneged on a promise to pay \$3 million to a representative of the Lebanese kidnappers who agreed to free the three remaining French hostages in 1988.

The newspaper said the failure to pay the money to Sheikh Abdul Monem Zein, a Lebanese-born Shiite Muslim religious leader in Dakar, Senegal, could have been the motive for last September's bombing of a Paris-bound UTA flight, in which 171 people died.

Jacques Chirac, who was premier at the time of the negotiations that led to the May 1988 hostage release, denied the Liberation report.

"France never promised nor paid the smallest sum in exchange for the release of the hostages," Chirac said Wednesday on Europe 1 radio. "I was premier. I take the responsibility to say there never were negotiations involving this Sheikh Zein, who I never heard of before."

Liberation said French officials operating under the direction of then-Interior Minister Charles Pasqua apparently pursued two sets of negotiations at the same time — one with the Iranian and Syrian governments and one with Sheikh Zein, who had close contacts with the Shiite extremists holding the French captives in Lebanon.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Syrian, Egyptian aides discuss ties

DAMASCUS (R) — Egypt's Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid telephoned his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Shara to discuss ties between the two countries. The official Syrian News Agency (SANA) said the call was made Tuesday night but gave no further details of the issues discussed. The conversation was the first contact between the two ministers since the restoration of diplomatic ties last December after a 12 year break.

Tunisia blames militants for unrest

TUNIS (R) — Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui has blamed the country's Islamic movement for a wave of student unrest. Police detained at least 595 students last week when Islamic militants occupied 10 university buildings to press authorities to withdraw police from campuses, drop plans to move an Islamic law institute and reinstate students suspended earlier in the academic year. "All these arguments are no more than pretexts and behind the troubles at the university there are secret political designs," Karoui told a meeting of the ruling party Tuesday night. "No one has the right to jeopardize the future of the rising generations by using religion for political ends," he said. Karoui said 391 of the arrested students have been drafted into the army and the other 204 released. The Islamist-dominated Tunisian General Students' Union has said 400 students were still held out of 700 it said were arrested. On Wednesday the union said police had since picked up other students for questioning. Karoui said the decision to move the institute to new premises was temporary and it would eventually be housed near Tunis' ancient Zaituna Mosque, "a site which will be the pride of the city."

Burning tanker towed out of Gulf

DUBAI (R) — A blazing U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti tanker full of volatile naphtha was towed out of the Gulf overnight away from busy shipping lanes, the owners said Wednesday. The products carrier Surf City exploded last Thursday 30 miles off the United Arab Emirates killing two of its American crew. The blast appeared to be internal. Chesapeake Shipping said in a statement Wednesday that it believed the fires raging on the 69,991-tonne ship could be put out and the vessel salvaged but the nature of the highly-inflammable cargo meant the outcome was unpredictable. The owners have said that there was no major threat of sea pollution because the cargo was burning itself away.

Canadian sentenced in Iran arms case

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (R) — A Canadian man was sentenced to a year in prison and fined \$5,000 in U.S. federal court for conspiracy and money laundering in connection with illegal arms sales to Iran. Ronald Arab, 52, of Vancouver, pleaded guilty last autumn to conspiracy and money laundering charges after he, his wife Eileen and Swedish businessman Karl Erik Nissen were caught last spring at the airport here with parts for F-4C Phantom jets intended for shipment to Iran. Nissen, a 63-year-old businessman from Norrkoping, Sweden, was sentenced Monday to 44 months in jail and fined \$10,000 for his part in the attempted sales, which are prohibited under U.S. law. Eileen Arab, 52, was put on probation under a plea bargain reached with prosecutors last December. Ronald Arab, as part of his plea bargain, testified against Nissen in a trial last November, disputing the Swede's contention he did not know he was breaking U.S. export laws. Nissen was convicted of conspiracy, money laundering, and illegally exporting arms.

Polisario warns of Moroccan attacks

TINDOUF, Algeria (R) — The leader of Polisario guerrillas fighting for the independence of Western Sahara told his people to prepare for fierce Moroccan attacks in the next two years. Mohammed Abdul Aziz, secretary-general of the Polisario Front, told the closing session of a Saharan Women's Conference Morocco had decided to mobilise all efforts to extinguish the Saharan cause. "You could be the target of the worst attacks over the next two years. The king has decided to mobilise all his potential to end Saharan efforts for national independence," he said. Abdul Aziz was addressing several hundred Saharan women and foreign visitors assembled in a desert refugee camp in south western Algeria. Algeria backed the Polisario before a 1988 rapprochement with Morocco.

Iran denies differences over Rushdie

NICOSIA (R) — All Iranian leaders, including the president, support an order for Muslims to kill British author Salman Rushdie, Iran's top judge said in remarks reported by Tehran Radio Wednesday. Comments by President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in a Friday prayer sermon on Feb. 16 that the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's decree ordering Rushdie's killing could be disputed and debated by senior Islamic scholars led to speculation that he was seeking to weaken the order. Tehran Radio, monitored in Nicosia, said Iran's head of judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi told a meeting of senior judges Tuesday that Western media reports of splits over the Khomeini's order were wrong.

Velayati begins African tour

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati left for Ghana Wednesday on the first leg of a five-nation African tour, the Iranian News Agency IRNA reported. It said Velayati would also visit Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone and Nigeria during his week-long trip. Iran's Islamic leaders have expanded Tehran's ties with many African countries as part of a policy of strengthening relations with the Third World.

Israeli officials expect 230,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants in '90

TEL AVIV (AP) — A senior government official's prediction that 230,000 Soviet Jews could immigrate to Israel this year heightened fears Wednesday that Israel was unprepared for the influx.

"Panic: A quarter-million new immigrants on their way," read a banner headline in the Hebrew daily Hadashot.

The Hebrew daily Maariv and state-run Israel Radio noted that the new figure heightened confusion over immigration estimates since most officials are predicting that about 100,000 Soviet Jews will immigrate this year.

Even this number could be a problem, because Israel has geared up to receive only half that total.

The higher prediction came from Yasha Kazakov, deputy head of the liaison bureau, a once-secret government department that deals with Soviet Jewry, Israel media said.

Hadashot said he gave the figure Tuesday to a group of directors of government ministries that handle immigration.

Maariv said he thought 50,000 Soviet Jews would arrive by June, an additional 120,000 in the summer and 60,000 more in the last

four months.

The projections were based on the possibility of increased migration via the existing routes through Romania and Hungary and new exit routes through Czechoslovakia, Finland and Poland, Maariv said.

"When he pulled out the numbers we were in a state of shock," Ephraim Cohen, deputy director of the Absorption Ministry, told Maariv. "There was silence in the hall."

So far this year, 9,441 Soviet Jews have arrived, joining more than 12,000 who immigrated in 1989.

The upsurge in Soviet Jewish immigration comes as a result of more liberal Soviet emigration policies and U.S. visa restrictions.

Israel's immigration predictions have raised eyebrows in some quarters. Gennady Zhuravlev, the Soviet ambassador in Egypt, charged Monday that Israel was deliberately overestimating the number of Soviet Jews it expects to get more aid from the United States and other Western nations.

Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz, speaking Wednesday Israel Army Radio in a telephone

interview from New York, said it was hard to predict immigration accurately.

"Undoubtedly, at least 120,000 to 150,000 will come with God's help, but there may be surprises and many more may come," he said.

Peretz did not say whether his figures referred only to Soviet Jews or included immigrants from other countries as well.

He said he was visiting the United States to try to get more help from American Jewry for immigration.

"Without a massive help from the Jewish people, we will not be able to fulfill this historic mission," Peretz said.

Meanwhile, Uri Gordon, head of the Immigration Department at the Jewish Agency, a quasi-governmental body that deals with immigrants, demanded that Israel declare a state of emergency to deal with the Soviet immigrants.

"We witness an historical moment," Gordon said. "It does not matter whether he expect 100,000 or 200,000. Masses of Jews could come. Hundreds arrive every night... this obliges us to declare an emergency situation and set different priorities."

U.N. issues implied rebuke after Denktash statement

UNITED NATIONS (R) — A U.N. spokesman issued an implied rebuke late Tuesday to Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash for having commented publicly on talks under way here on the future of Cyprus and for giving an incomplete version of a statement by Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Without mentioning Denktash by name, the U.N. spokesman alluded to remarks made to reporters by the Turkish Cypriot leader, who said the secretary general had "for the first time in the history of the United Nations... underlined that there are two politically equal communities in Cyprus and that the problem is not between a majority and minority."

This was "a very big step in the right direction," Denktash had added, before entering a second day of meeting with Cypriot President George Vassiliou and Perez de Cuellar.

In his statement about seven hours later, the U.N. spokesman said that when the talks opened "Monday," the secretary general had suggested that both the two leaders and he refrain from making any public statement about the talks while they are in progress.

The spokesman added: "At that meeting, the secretary general made a lengthy and detailed opening statement which cannot be fully paraphrased or quoted out of context."

The spokesman declined to elaborate on his statement, drafted by a senior U.N. official directly involved in the talks and apparently prompted by the Greek Cypriot side, angered by Denktash's public remarks.

Members of Vassiliou's party had told reporters several hours in advance that the spokesman was about to issue such a rebuke.

The talks here, which continued Wednesday, aim at reuniting the divided Mediterranean island under a federal system.

Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since troops from Turkey occupied the northern part of the island in 1974 after a coup in Nicosia.

Sister of hostage says U.S., Syria and Iran cooperating

LONDON (AP) — The sister of the longest-held Western hostage in Lebanon was expected to lead a "humanitarian pilgrimage" to Europe and the Middle East Wednesday optimistic that the United States, Syria and Iran are cooperating with the aim of releasing all the captives.

"I think that this is the beginning of the end," said Peggy Say, sister of Terry Anderson, 42, chief Middle East correspondent of the Associated Press.

"There was almost, if not 100 per cent, agreement among everybody that I talked to that the timing seems to be right," she said in a British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) Television interview Wednesday.

Mrs. Say was to conclude her 2½ week trip with a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, followed by private dinner with families of British hostages and Scottish relatives of American hostage Thomas Sutherland. Runcie's person-

al envoy, Terry Waite, is among the 18 Western hostages.

"It might not happen tomorrow," Mrs. Say said.

"It might not happen next week, but when it happens, I believe it's going to be all of them, and I would rather see all the hostages come out next month than see Terry Anderson come out today alone."

For the first time since her brother was kidnapped in Muslim west Beirut on March 16, 1985, Mrs. Say said she believes the three key nations were cooperating in trying to free the 18 Westerners held in Lebanon.

"There had to be the U.S., Syria and Iran. It had to be a cooperative effort and I feel that it is, given that nothing happens to interfere with it," she said in an interview Tuesday night.

"We've got all the components here. Given that everything stays on track, I feel it will end, as other people say to me, sooner rather than later."

Turkey assesses anti-U.S. measures after failure of Armenian resolution

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey said Wednesday it would review measures it had taken against the United States after the U.S. Senate blocked a resolution saying Armenians were victims of genocide early this century.

"The measures taken against the United States are now being assessed. Our final assessment will be clear within two or three days," Foreign Ministry spokesman Murat Sungar said.

Ankara imposed limited curbs on U.S. activities in NATO-member Turkey, affecting flight training and navy visits, after the Armenian resolution was proposed by Senate Republican leader Robert Dole late last year.

The resolution, regarded by Ankara as untrue and deeply offensive and is also opposed by the Bush administration, calls for April 24, 1990, to be a national day of "remembrance" on the

75th anniversary of the Armenian genocide of 1915-1923. Fifty-one senators voted against. A similar vote last week tied at 49-49.

Successive Turkish governments have denied accusations that up to 1.5 million Armenians were victims of genocide during and after World War I.

"It is the duty of historians and scientists to analyse and evaluate events which occurred in history," a Foreign Ministry statement said. "We appreciate that the Senate did not want to take a responsibility which is not its area of duty."

Sungar said that in reviewing anti-U.S. measures Turkey would consider the possibility that the resolution might pass if it was presented to Congress again.

Ankara has said that if the resolution was passed, its ties with Washington could be affected, threatening a pact under

which U.S. troops are stationed in Turkey in return for aid.

In Washington, Dole said he's not giving up his effort to mark the deaths of Armenians during the reign of the Ottoman Empire.

Dole said Tuesday that he might introduce the controversial resolution in another form.

Opponents in the Senate argued that the resolution could seriously jeopardize U.S. relations with Turkey.

Dole said Americans of Armenian heritage deserved to be recognized for their suffering, and called the resolution a human rights issue.

Dole mustered only 48 of the 60 votes needed to cut off a filibuster, or unlimited debate, led by Senator Robert Byrd and get the resolution formally before the Senate.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

| JORDAN TELEVISION | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Tel: 773111-19 | |
| PROGRAMME ONE | Koran |
| 15:30 | Programme review |
| 15:45 | Children programme |
| 17:15 | Book of Adventure |
| 18:00 | News for the Deaf |
| 18:20 | Religious programme |
| 19:00 | Health programme |
| 20:00 | Programme review |
| 20:30 | News in Arabic |
| 21:30 | Local series |
| 21:40 | Programme review |
| 22:20 | Local programme |
| 22:30 | Arabic film |
| 23:00 | News in Arabic |
| PROGRAMME TWO | |
| 18:00 | Tel Peto Tel Film |
| 18:30 | La Chance aux chansons |
| 19:00 | News in French |
| 19:15 | Documentary |
| 19:30 | News in Hebrew |
| 19:45 | Varieties |
| 20:00 | News in Arabic |
| 20:30 | A Different World |
| 21:10 | NBA Basketball |
| 22:00 | News in English |
| 22:30 | Feature film |
| PRAYER TIMES | |
| 06:43 | Fajr |
| 07:00 | (Sunrise) Dhah |
| 11:40 | Dhah |
| 12:04 | Asr |
| 17:56 | Maghreb |
| 18:53 | Isha |
| CHURCHES | |
| St. Mary of Nazareth Church | Schwartz Tel. 810740 |

| Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632783 | |
|---|--|
| St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590 | Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440 |
| De la Salle Church Tel. 661757 | Terrace Church Tel. 623666 |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541 | Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628343 |
| Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331 | Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 |
| St. Raphael Church Tel. 771751 | Armenian International Church Tel. 827981, 685326 |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295 | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 813817 and 654932 |
| WEATHER | |
| Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. | |
| The Kingdom will be affected by a depression accompanied by a cold front. Thus, clouds increase gradually and rain will fall in various parts of the Kingdom. Winds will be westerly to southwesterly in the eastern and southern regions. In Amman, possible scattered showers are expected in the afternoon and winds will be southerly moderate and sea rough. | |
| PRAYER TIMES | |
| Min./max. temp. | 5/10 |
| Amman | 8/20 |
| Amman | 3/13 |
| Jordan Valley | 9/18 |

| USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| NIGHT DUTY | |
| AMMAN: | |
| Dr. Al Assad | 879719 |
| Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad | 826763 |
| Dr. Mohammad Azam | 819225 |
| Dr. Mohammad Khalil | 826294 |
| Fina pharmacy | 661912 |
| Perdons pharmacy | 778336 |
| Al Assad pharmacy | 670705 |
| Naturopharmacy | 623672 |
| Al Salem pharmacy | 626730 |
| Yacoub pharmacy | 644945 |
| Al-Salam pharmacy | 637660 |
| JERUSALEM: | |
| Dr. Ma'n Barghout | (-) |
| Al Shamsa pharmacy | (985236) |
| ZARQA: | |
| Dr. Ziyad Hawatmi | (-) |
| Khalid pharmacy | 954317 |
| EMERGENCIES | |
| Civil Defence Department | 661111 |
| Civil Defence Immediate | 60841 |
| University Hospital | 692465 |
| Civil Defence Emergency | 199 |
| Rescue Police | 192, 621111, 637777 |
| Fire Brigade | 891228 |

| BLOOD BANK | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Highway Police | 775121 |
| Police Department | 843402 |
| Traffic Police | 896390 |
| Public Security Department | 630321 |
| Hotel Complaints | 608900 |
| Police Complaints | 661176 |
| Water and Sewerage | |
| Complaints | 897467 |
| Amman Municipality | |
| Complaints | 787111 |
| Telephone Information | 121 |
| Overseas Calls | 010230 |
| Central Amman Telephone | |
| Reprints | 623101 |
| Abdull Telephone Repair | 661101 |
| Jordan Television | 773111 |
| Radio Jordan | 774111 |
| Water Authority | 680100 |
| Jordan Electricity Authority | 815615 |
| Electric Power | |
| Comptel | 636381 |
| RJ Flight Information | 08-53200 |
| Queen Alia Int. Airport | 08-53200 |
| HOSPITALS | |
| AMMAN: | |
| House Medical Centre | 813813/372 |
| Khalid Maternity, J. Amn | 642816 |
| Al-Salam Maternity, J. Amn | 624412 |
| Jabal Amman Maternity | 642662 |
| Malhas, J. Amman | 664171/4 |
| St. Joseph Hospital | 669121 |
| University Hospital | 692465 |
| Al-Salam Hospital | 692219 |
| The Islamic, Abdull | 666127/77 |
| Al-Ahli, Abdull | 6641646 |

| FOR THE TRAVELLER | |
|---|---------------|
| QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT | |
| Italian, Al-Malahjoun | 777101/2 |
| Al-Salam, J. Amn | 775111/2 |
| Army, Marha | 891611/15 |
| Queen Alia Hospital | 602407/50 |
| Amal Hospital | 674135 |
| ZARQA: | |
| Zarqa Govt. Hospital | (09)883323 |
| Zarqa National Hospital | (09)991071 |
| Ibn Sin Hospital | (09)986732 |
| JERUSALEM: | |
| Prince Basmah Hospital | (02)775555 |
| Greek Catholic Hospital | (02)772725 |
| Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital | (02)747100 |
| AQABA: | |
| Prince Hays Hospital | (03)314111 |
| ARRIVALS | |
| Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) | |
| 07:00 | Damascus (RJ) |
| 09:15 | Amman (RJ) |
| 09:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 10:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 11:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 12:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 13:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 14:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 15:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 16:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 17:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 18:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 19:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 20:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 21:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 22:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 23:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 24:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 25:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 26:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 27:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 28:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 29:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 30:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 31:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 32:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 33:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 34:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 35:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 36:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 37:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 38:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 39:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 40:30 | Amman (RJ) |
| 41:30 | Amman (RJ) |

Official laments private sector performance, urges better use of potential

AMMAN (Petra) — The private sector's contribution to the implementation of the 1986-1990 five year development plan did not exceed 30 per cent in the past year although this sector has the potential to play a very important role in the development of the national economy, complained Dr. Abdullah Abu Ayyash, director of regional planning at the Ministry of Planning.

"The private sector in Jordan can and should play a major role to help the country carry out its economic adjustment programme which is being spearheaded by the public sector to stimulate the national economy," said Abu Ayyash at a meeting attended by the heads of five committees in charge of regional planning for the Amman area.

"The private sector is invited to complement the efforts of the government to put the economy on the right track through new investments that would bring in more income and improve the country's balance of payments," Abu Ayyash said.

All sectors are required to contribute since the task is a national one," he added.

His views are echoed by Amman Governor Mohammad Al Amin, who urged individuals and private organisations to increase their investments in small-scale projects.

"The present economic difficulties in Jordan makes it imperative on all sectors to cooperate fully and to follow a new constructive course that would ensure the best exploitation of the available resources," Amin said at the meeting.

The meeting reviewed programmes for 1990 and analysed the achievements of the past four years.

Agricultural committee

Mifteh Al Odettallah, chairman of the agricultural committee, presented a report on the agricultural situation in the Amman region. He urged the concerned authorities to speed up enactment of legislations that would ensure proper use and protection of lands.

He called on the armed forces, students at schools and universities, the Public Security Department (PSD) and other organisations to actively participate in the country's afforestation projects.

The report also recommended that measures be taken to halt encroachment on farmland by construction operations which reduce the amount of arable and productive land.

It suggested the formation of a specialised farmers association that can handle the process of importing farming requirements and marketing of products.

The participants reviewed a report by the industrial committee which pointed out several problems in the industrial sector. The report called industrialists to diversify and upgrade the quality of their manufactured products. It also called for increased cooperation between the private and public sectors to reduce unemployment. The report proposed ideas about dealing with environmental pollution and industrial security.

Commercial committee

The commercial committee's report outlined the difficulties encountered in trade, referring in particular to local and international events which have contributed to the aggravation of these problems. The report presented ideas to help boost free trade and reactivate the national economy.

The report proposed more facilities and tax exemptions, called for supporting the private sector to invest capital in commercial schemes, and urged the government to provide for transport and communication that facilitate these efforts.

The infrastructure committee's report proposed that priority should now be given to telephone services in areas lacking them including Hay Nazal, Al Marikh and Jabal Al Akhdar and Abdoun. It also called for installation of more post office boxes at post offices to facilitate communication services.

A report by the social services sector committee urged the concerned authorities to launch training courses for workers who could take over jobs from non-Jordanians, and to expand the base of vocational training for highschool graduates. The report also urged more attention be given to primary health care services to reduce the pressure on hospitals run by the National Medical Institution (NMI).

The housing committee report stressed the need to reduce the cost of home construction, and urged authorities to encourage traditional building designs that are in harmony with the Arab and Islamic architecture.

Air pollution levels worry environmentalists

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Air pollution in Jordan may not be as critical as in the heavily industrialised countries of the West, but environmentalists are concerned over areas such as Zarqa, Aqaba and downtown Amman because the level of pollution in those areas exceeds internationally accepted standards.

A three-day workshop was held in Amman this week to discuss the issue and seek means and ways to keep the pollution level in check. Among the issues discussed at the workshop, held at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), were air pollution monitoring, standards and specifications as well as health hazards.

Arab and foreign representatives from Syria, Kuwait, Egypt, Canada and the U.S. in addition to delegates from Arab universities and research centres and institutions concerned with the environment attended the three-day workshop.

The objectives of the workshop was to review activities, obstacles and research efforts undertaken in the Middle East region and to discuss and analyse procedures to set national air pollution standards

as well as to increase awareness of the importance of air pollution monitoring on a global level.

According to Ayman Al Hassan, from the Environmental Research Centre at the RSS, several surveys were conducted in different parts of the country in the past few years. One of the surveys took place between 1986-1989 to establish a baseline information on the extent of air pollution and to obtain the necessary data for the development of air quality standards for urban areas in Jordan. Hassan said that with this base, the RSS consulted with foreign environmentalists at this workshop to help Jordan design a strategy suitable to local needs.

The survey, which was conducted by seven technicians, chemists and engineers from the Environmental Research Centre, had monitors in Jubeiha, a sparsely populated and clean area, in downtown Amman to measure traffic emissions at the city centre, and in Marka, in eastern Amman which represents a residential area with light industry.

According to Hassan, the study revealed that nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and

sulphur dioxide concentrations were very high in different parts of the city, "but particularly in the downtown area, the concentrations were higher than international standards."

He explained that the area is a restricted-ventilation area where the mass pollution is trapped because the town is surrounded by hills and there are heavy and continuous traffic congestions throughout the year.

According to the survey which was announced at the workshop, the highest levels of sulphur dioxide were recorded during the rush hours in the morning and evening. Hassan added that weekends and cold climate tend to encourage the level of sulphur.

Environmentalists maintain that if measures are not taken soon, the extremely high concentration of such particles could cause detrimental health effects damaging peoples' lungs, throats and eyes. Such pollution has been in the area for a long time and residents have been raising complaints on and off over unhealth air, experts said.

Dr. Dan Kelley, Canadian science and engineer adviser at the Department of Environment, said that although resi-

dents may feel irritated now, pollution also has long-term effects. Therefore, health experts and planners, environmentalists and policy-makers must get together now to design strategy to conquer pollution.

Hassan said that the surveys were not sufficient and a broader investigation was needed before the issue could be addressed in all its aspects.

While downtown Amman is mainly endangered by traffic congestions, there are other areas of major concern to environmentalists. After a one year study in Zarqa in 1989, it was found that high levels of hydrogen sulphide polluted the air, according to Nageh Akeel, air pollution and hazardous material division manager at the RSS.

Akeel said that the main sources of pollution in the Zarqa area were the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company, the Khirbet Al Samra Waste Water Treatment Plant, and the Al Hussein Thermal Power Station. According to the survey, out of 195 observations about 51 exceeded internationally accepted standards which are about 0.06 particles per million (PPM), while the Zarqa area recorded 0.32

PPM.

Akeel said that residents often complain about difficulty in breathing in Al Hasbemiyyeh, a town in Zarqa which is adjacent to the three plants. According to health specialists, high doses of hydrogeosulphide produce severe effects on the nervous and respiratory systems and to wildlife.

Akeel added that there is a lot more work to do because what was discovered so far is little compared to the other pollutants that "we do not know about yet that are harmful to health and wildlife."

According to surveys, the Jordan Petroleum Refinery and Al Hussein Thermal Power Station emit around 27,000 tonnes of sulphur every year. (Hussein plant alone emits 15,000 tonnes yearly).

Akeel also expressed concern over the Aqaba port where large amounts of fuel oil are consumed. Fuel oil contains about four per cent sulphur.

Akeel said that a way must be found to minimise the sulphur ecosystem. "This workshop should enable us to come up with a national standard and conduct more in-depth research to tackle this critical problem," he said.

Group urges Palestinian universities be reopened

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Association of Arab Universities (AAU) Wednesday urged international organisations to end Israel's arbitrary actions against Palestinian universities, and appealed for help to reopen these institutions, closed since the start of the uprising in the occupied Arab territories in December 1987.

AAU secretary-general Mohammad Dughaim sent cables to United Nations Secretary

General Javier Perez de Cuellar and to the director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Paris urging speedy action to reopen the universities.

"We strongly condemn the unjustified closure of Palestinian universities and other institutions of higher education by the Israeli occupying authorities and request your excellencies to use your good offices to secure the reopen-

ing of Palestinian universities and other institutions," said Dughaim in the cables.

He said Palestinian students should be allowed to enjoy basic human rights in acquiring knowledge in peace and dignity.

The appeal followed Tuesday's reports from the occupied Arab territories which quoted Israeli spokesmen for the civil administration as saying that universities would be kept closed for at least

three more months, despite Arab and Western protests.

The decision defied repeated protests by the European Community, which had threatened to suspend scientific cooperation with Israeli universities over the issue.

Students held sit-ins at educational institutions across the occupied West Bank earlier in the day to demand that the six Arab

universities in the occupied territories be reopened.

Israel, claiming that the campuses were centres of unrest, closed them immediately after the uprising erupted in December 1987.

According to earlier reports, students occupied the Red Cross office in Ramallah and similar demonstrations were reported by Palestinians in Jerusalem and Hebron.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Trade licence deadline extended

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Karim Al Dughaim has issued a circular extending the time allowed for acquiring trade licences until the end of March. The measure is designed to give concerned people extra time so as to avoid paying fines.

Egypt seeks Arab investment

CAIRO (J.T.) — Jordan will be one of four Arab countries which will be visited by an Egyptian economic and industrial delegation in mid-March to discuss joint ventures, according to a senior official here. Engineer Adel Al Danaf, who heads the state's industrial corporation, was quoted as saying that the delegation would be visiting Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to discuss prospects for attracting investors in a steel plant project expected to be set up in Egypt. He said that the \$120 million project would have a capacity of producing 120,000 tonnes of steel annually.

ADC chapter plans intifada dinner

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman chapter of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) will hold its annual fund-raising dinner at the Intercontinental Hotel Saturday, March 3, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein. The dinner commemorates the 10th anniversary of the association. Former U.S. Senator James Abourezk will also be in attendance. All proceeds from the dinner, priced at \$1000 a couple, will go towards supporting the intifada.

U.N. anti-crime expert arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — United Nations Regional Advisor for combating Crime Pedro David arrived in Amman Wednesday on a several-day visit to Jordan. He will visit rehabilitation centres.

No smoking day at hotel

AMMAN (J.T.) — On March 1, 1990, all employees of the Marriott who smoke will voluntarily give up smoking for the day and donate the price of the cigarettes they would have smoked to the National Jordanian Anti-Smoking Society. The Marriott staff have all volunteered to join in on the annual no smoking day, held for the second time this year, as part of a continuing effort to support the health consciousness and awareness programmes sponsored by the government.

University spends JD 300,000 on staff health

AMMAN (J.T.) — University of Jordan President Mahmoud Samra has said that the university spends JD 300,000 a year as contribution to medical services provided to its employees. He added, during a meeting with university staff Wednesday, that the university is keen to provide quality services to its employees, including medical and life insurance.

Arabisation of army marked

AMMAN (J.T.) — Today is the 34th anniversary of the Arabisation of the Jordanian Armed Forces upon orders from His Majesty King Hussein.

The King ordered the termination of the services of General John Glubb, as commander of the Armed Forces, and said that Jordanian officers should take up the command of the Kingdom's Armed Forces.

The move was significant in view of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and the dangers that Israel's occupation of Palestine posed to the Arab Nation. It also came as a manifestation of Jordan's desire to rid itself of foreign domination.

Since March 1, 1956, King Hussein has continually worked towards strengthening the Armed Forces and has made all efforts to ensure they are provided with the most up to date weapons required for defending the homeland.

On the occasion of the anniversary, Chief of Staff General Fathi Abo Taleb Wednesday sent a cable to the King conveying the congratulations of the Armed Forces. He said that the King's "historic decision came amid difficult and crucial circumstances in the Arab World and crowning the struggle of the vanguards who led the Great Arab Revolt and sought to uphold its principles and to achieve its mission."

Abu Taleb said that the Armed Forces take pride in serving under the King and reiterated their allegiance to the throne.

Jordan, Syria discuss cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Syria Wednesday began a series of meetings to discuss ways for promoting cooperation in industrial fields under resolutions adopted by the Joint Syrian-Jordanian Higher Committee last month.

The two sides led by Syrian Minister of Industry Antoine Jubran and his Jordanian counterpart Ziyad Fariz discussed areas where joint industrial schemes can be launched and also reviewed exchanges of manufactured goods.

Fariz said at the opening session that these steps were essential to stimulate the national economies of the two countries. "We are trying to open new channels for cooperation in industry and industrial coordination," Fariz said at the meeting. Jubran said industrial cooperation was a key element for Arab economic integration and also essential for development in Jordan and Syria.

Experts stress Jordan's need to focus on exports, manufacturing

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — Jordanian trade relations should be expected to change significantly in the 1990s, transforming Jordan from an import-oriented country to a state manufacturing and exporting goods and services, according to members of the Jordanian-Scandinavian Businessmen Association (Scandub), at a yearly club function last week.

"If Jordanians concentrate on developing small-scale industries, develop their marketing techniques and infrastructure and have confidence in their ability to produce and export locally-made products, then the transformation from a service and import-oriented society to a manufacturing and export-oriented society will be relatively easy," said Peter Andersen, from the Royal Danish Commercial Office, who is an active member of Scandub.

Scandub President Khaled

Nabghali told a group of Jordanian and Scandinavian businessmen based in Amman that "Jordan must change and will change from trading into production... to fight off the burden which has been put on its economy."

In his capacity as a member of Scandub, Andersen presented some of his thoughts as to how Jordanians could help themselves to build a more feasible infrastructure for industrial successes.

Andersen stressed the importance of small-scale industries which would serve local and international markets. "Industries comprised of six-15 people make up 70 per cent of the Danish industries," he said. "These industries export goods because Denmark's local market, like that of Jordan, is small. The point is that such operations do not need millions of dinars. They need only JD 100,000 - 200,000 to begin with," he pointed out.

He believes that while Jordan's large publicly-owned industries

such as the fertiliser, potash and cement factories employ thousands of people they also need heavy investment which is not feasible for everyone interested in establishing an industry.

"The message is that production possibilities in Jordan are almost limitless and the people have the education to do it, so let them go ahead. Invest, find out what's needed in the international market and build your little industry," he said.

One of the steps the government could take, Andersen said is to cut tariffs on raw materials needed by local industries.

"If the people with the money don't make things happen in the business and industrial sectors then the brain drain in Jordan will increase," and so will the country's problems," said Andersen.

Outside investment

Although most grants and

funds made available by foreign institutions and governments are aimed at the public sector, Andersen believes they have not been taken advantage of to the fullest.

"Jordan is getting a lot of interest-free loans and grants from all over the world and maybe they could be used to encourage the public sector as well. Small industries are not a taboo for anyone," he said.

He said that while foreigners had been willing to invest in Jordan for a long time, Jordanians had not seized that full opportunities to take full advantage of what was being offered to them.

"Jordanians have to know that foreigners need incentives to invest in Jordan. No-one has to invest in this country but many are willing and able. All we ask is that Jordanians meet us half way. Pass some encouraging investment laws and watch the investments grow," Andersen said.

Palestinians stage strike

(Continued from page 1)

broken up by soldiers firing tear-gas, and six students were arrested, reports said.

The six Palestinian universities have been closed by army orders for two years.

Tourist stabbed

A 58-year-old British tourist was stabbed in the back Wednesday as he walked alone in the West Bank town of Hebron, Israeli hospital officials said.

Israel Radio said the man was found by the side of a road with a knife in his back by a Jewish settler who lives near Hebron and rushed to hospital in Jerusalem.

Ruth Mekel, the hospital's spokeswoman, said the man was in moderate condition after surgery to repair the knife wound and damage to one lung.

Neither the hospital nor officials at the British consulate would release the victim's name, saying his family had not yet been notified.

It was unclear what the man was doing alone in Hebron, which has been the site of repeated clashes between Palestinians, Jewish settlers and Israeli troops.

Attacks on foreigners have been rare during the uprising.

Since the rebellion began in December 1987, three foreigners have been killed, all in an attack on a bus last July. Thirteen Israelis were also killed in the bus attack.

The army said Hebron was put under a curfew, which confines people to their homes, and that

search and arrest operations were under way. Army officials declined to say how many people were detained.

Houses destroyed

Israeli troops destroyed five houses in the occupied territories Wednesday to punish the families of Palestinian activists accused of anti-Israeli crimes.

The house demolitions occurred despite repeated criticism from the United States and human rights groups that Israel's policy of destroying and sealing houses constitutes collective punishment.

The U.S. State Department said in its human rights report released Feb. 20 that "the United States believes demolition and sealing as punishment families contravenes the Fourth Geneva Convention."

The convention, to which Israel is a signatory, regulates the rights and treatment of people under occupation.

One of the homes blown up, in the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, belonged to 60-year-old Abdul Raouf Mabhouh and included two other apartments housing a total of 35 people, reports said.

The army said Mabhouh's son Mahmud, 30, was wanted in connection with the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers last year. Military officials who insisted on anonymity said Mahmud was a member of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement and is believed to have fled to Egypt.

Jordan begins exports of flowers

(Continued from page 1)

"What is special about the commitment is that it is a combined effort of exporters who are private sector producers, and AMO, which is a government agency," he pointed out.

Awamleh stressed that while in the past, relations between the government sector and the agricultural community were often strained and recent moves

indicated that relations were being reestablished.

"Agriculture is very important to Jordan. At present approximately 12 per cent of Jordanian exports are agricultural exports and they could increase easily if Jordanian agricultural exporters work together," Awamleh said.

He said that Jordanian vegetable exports worldwide

amounted to 350,000 tonnes in the 1986-87 season and increased to 580,000 tonnes in the 1988-89 season. Vegetable exports to EC countries during the same period increased from 380 tonnes to 2,000 tonnes.

Israel, a main vegetable and fruits exporter to EC countries, exports \$150 million worth of fruits and vegetables to West Germany every year.

Arab American voice heard, Dole says

(Continued from page 1)

Boehlt, Republican from New York; Joe Kennedy, Democrat from Massachusetts; and Howard Nielsen, Republican from Utah.

During a session on Lebanon, David Newton, director of the office of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestinian affairs at the Department of State, said the United States strongly supports the legitimate government of President Elias Hrawi in Lebanon.

On the issue of arms flows from other countries into Lebanon, Newton said, "Everybody should do everything that can be done to keep arms out." Asked whether the United States will send a special envoy to Lebanon, Newton said, "I don't see a lot to be gained by a special envoy."

Priorities for the United States in Lebanon should be to "get Israel out of Lebanon and with the Soviet Union, impose an embargo on arms flowing into Lebanon," James Zogby, the executive director of the Arab

American Institute, told participants. "The best key to American intentions in Lebanon is to make it clear to Israel that it must leave Lebanon," Zogby said.

On the question of the Middle East peace process, Peter Eicher, deputy director of the Office of Egyptian Affairs at the State Department, said that "advancing the peace process is a high foreign policy priority for the Bush administration."

Despite political constraints faced by all parties, the peace process "continues to show vitality," Eicher stressed. The United States "will continue to be steady, and to press Israelis and Palestinians into a structured dialogue, elections and negotiations."

William Quandt, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, outlined positive and negative elements to the peace process. He noted "virtual Arab unanimity in support of the two-state solution" as a positive point. He under-

scored the "remarkable degree of political realism" displayed by the Palestinians in accepting the gradual approach to the peace process. Quandt noted that public opinion polls in Israel and the United States demonstrate increased support in Arab and Jewish communities for reconciliation.

On the negative side, Quandt pointed to the "stalemate in the Israeli body politic, making it impossible to make conclusions on policy." Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel may also contribute to "less inclination to territorial compromise by the Israeli government," he said. He questioned whether the Palestinian support for restraint will continue without progress in the peace process. There are "signs of movement towards a more militant alternative," he said.

"The passage of time does not work in favour of success in the peace process. Things will get worse, and human costs continue to mount," Quandt stressed.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arab press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

* An exhibition of posters entitled "The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr." at Yarmouk University.

* An exhibition of oils and watercolours by Jordanian artist Yusef Badawi at the gallery, Hotel Jordan Inter-Continental — 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

* Poetry recital by Jordanian poets Haidar Mahmoud and Khaled Mhadia at the Royal Cultural Centre — 6:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* Lecture on archaeology in Jordan and the Arab Peninsula at the Royal Cultural Centre — 7:00 p.m.

FILM

* Feature film entitled "All About Eve" at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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Shuffling the feet, but where to

THE LATEST flurry of diplomatic and political activities in Washington, Tel Aviv and Cairo seem to suggest that a breakthrough on Israeli-Palestinian talks is imminent. What propelled this guarded optimism is the growing signals emanating from Israel that the government there is on the verge of accepting the U.S. proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. If this expectation actually materialises, it will mean that American policy in the Middle East has scored a first strike, especially if this projected Israeli acceptance of dialogue is paralleled by a unified Palestinian acceptance of the U.S. terms for such talks.

Yet, there is fear that all the optimism generated by these early developments is premature. To begin with, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is again having cold feet on the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Judging by his record, both recent and ancient, there is nothing that Shamir dreads more than dealing with the Palestinian side head on for fear that such negotiations would come to fruition. Shamir clearly feels more comfortable when chances are nil for peace talks with the Palestinian side. What is even more formidable is the fact that any such Palestinian-Israeli talks would necessarily take a long and tortuous road before they can be expected to produce real results. It is one thing to start such a dialogue and quite another to end it on positive and fair terms. Thus far there are no indicators from Israel that suggest that either the Labour or Likud parties have reconciled themselves to the proposition that Israel has to yield to the "peace for territories formula" before there can be genuine and lasting peace between it and its neighbours.

Nevertheless, there is no good purpose that can be served by pouring cold water on the prospects of peace talks in the Middle East. While it is too early to pin much hopes on the U.S. proposal getting the parties concerned anywhere, it is also premature to forecast gloom and doom in the ongoing search for peace. One thing, however, is sure: Time is ticking away very fast and playing well into the hands of extremism on both sides of the fence. Maybe Shamir has won his first round with Sharon, Levy and Modai, but there is no sure way to foretell the consequences of the next rounds between him and the extremists on his side of the fence. On the Arab side, it is a foregone conclusion that holding peace in the Middle East for much longer would reap wonders for Arab extremism as well. That is why time is not on the side of peace in the Middle East and the sooner the Palestinian conflict is brought to a peaceful and just resolution the better it would be for all concerned. There remains, however, no escape from convening an international conference on peace in the Middle East. Preliminary talks between the Palestinians and Israelis can take and should take place. But, at one stage or another, such negotiations need to be incorporated into the negotiations on the broader Arab-Israeli conflict where the U.N. Security Council would also have an opportunity to guarantee the outcome of the Arab-Israeli negotiations for all times. Anything less than that would simply be self-defeating for all sides.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

King Hussein will no doubt try through his current tour in the Gulf states to bolster ties between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), said Al Rai's Arabic daily Wednesday. The paper said this is a natural endeavour in view of the grave dangers and challenges facing the Arab World at the moment, and as the need for collective Arab action is growing every day. The Arab Union in general and the ACC and GCC blocs in particular possess vast potentials which can serve as a tool for joint action to deal with the common threats, the paper continued. It said that the Jewish influx into Palestine is no doubt at the top of priorities for the nation, since it is an issue that concerns all Arabs and not only Jordan and the Palestinians. Therefore, said the paper, there is no alternative to collective efforts and a firm stand at this crucial moment in Arab history and there is no alternative to a united and strong Arab Nation which does not only deal with this important issue but can take the Arabs into the 21st century.

A columnist in Al Rai's daily Wednesday calls on the Ministry of Labour to put an end to irresponsible action by employers who desperately try to secure the employment of non-Jordanians to work for at a lower salary and under more difficult conditions. Salah Abdel Samad says that some employers put up misleading advertisements in the local press, requesting workers to carry out such jobs as cleaning and handling, and at the same time demand that the applicants should have completed their secondary education and carry Tawjihi certificates. The writer notes that such jobs do not require any certificates or degrees; and the employers realise in advance that no people with certificates would come forth to take up these occupations. After failing to receive applications under these terms, he says, these employers call on the Ministry of Labour to allow them to employ non-Jordanians since they received no applications from Jordanian workers for the same occupations.

Al Dastour daily criticises Israel for dragging its feet to a meeting that would group the foreign ministers of Israel, the United States, and Egypt and which had been scheduled a long time ago. The paper said it seems that Israel is delaying any diplomatic initiative that has to do with the Middle East and is trying to stall any moves to hold elections in the occupied territories, as the projected meeting was hoping to achieve. We are led to believe now that Shamir does not want other parties' ideas on future peace but rather he wants to have his own way; and elections that serve Israel's purpose and no others, the paper said. We do not believe that a meeting between the three countries' foreign ministers requires so much time to prepare for, nor do we believe that the three ministers will arrive at a decision ensuring Israel's total withdrawal from Arab lands, the paper continued.

Talking Straight

Witch-hunting spells disaster

By Marwan Muasher

ABOUT a year ago, the government issued a military decree closing down all moneychangers in the country for what it called speculation on the dinar by them which led to the economic crisis the country was going through. Almost immediately, our press jumped on the wagon and published all kinds of articles supporting the government's position and even going beyond it, accusing moneychangers with every atrocity in the book. Two months later, the government collapsed, the country woke up to the fact that the economic crisis was much larger than anybody thought, and by the passage of time, it became apparent to everybody that no particular group or business sector alone could have been responsible for the crisis. It even became apparent that the largest factor responsible for our deep economic crisis was mismanagement by all successive governments who would not take the necessary measures to prevent the problem from happening. Today, the public mood is even sympathetic for the return of moneychangers who were made scapegoats. The prevailing feeling is that they were grossly mistreated by closing their businesses, for over a year now, and that they already should have been allowed to resume their operations.

Two weeks ago the Ministry of Labour issued a directive which has effectively banned foreign workers in Jordan from renewing their licenses except in certain sectors of the economy. Again, the press immediately and blindly jumped on the wagon, and, together with the ministry, reduced the whole problem of unemployment to blaming those "greedy businessmen" who refuse to employ Jordanians and who mistreat foreigners. No attempt was even made to look at the issue from all sides and to deal with it rationally. The scapegoat mentality again ruled our behaviour.

Through the first and second examples, our society has also been faced with a new phenomenon, that of underground leaflets accusing just about everybody in society with corruption. When they first appeared, the justification was that lack of freedoms had left people with no choice but to resort to these practices in order to voice their grievances. Today, with freedoms restored, leaflets have not only continued to appear, but have also dropped to such a low level of what can only be described as scum that people are reading them for amusement rather than as outlets against corruption.

The list is long, but I do not need to go any further to claim that we are engaging ourselves in a process of national witch-hunting. No two people would differ that today we face severe difficulties, on top of which is our present economic crisis. There are two alternatives we can opt for to deal with this crisis, however. We can choose the easy way out, like we have been doing, and look for scapegoats to cover our own impotence, or we can join hands in studying the causes of the problem and work together to overcome it. This is the more difficult, but more productive, and ultimately rewarding option. It is a national tragedy that both the government and the press, despite the vast changes they both experienced in personalities and outlooks over the past year, appear to have chosen the first course. It is a course that evades the real issues by directing society's energies at jumping at each other's throats instead of looking at the overall picture in an analytical way and suggesting proper solutions. It is a course, I am afraid, that could lead to disaster.

It does not take a world-class economist to realise that one of the most important factors in any economic recovery we hope to achieve is private investment. This investment does not come

about because of an emotional appeal by the government to its people. Rather, it is the product of a process of confidence-building, a healthy atmosphere nourished by the government through a package of consistent and clear policies, and supported by the private sector.

The need for society to work as a team has never been more evident as now. Instead, we have managed to draw a rift between the private and public sectors that has never been as wide. To the public, the private sector is today synonymous with greed, and special interests. Likewise, the public sector is synonymous with corruption, inefficiency, inconsistency, impotence.

These feelings have no doubt been nourished by greedy, inefficient, corrupt, inconsistent practices on both sides. What I am afraid of is that they are turning into a pattern of policies taken from institutions rather than individual actions. What is also aggravating the problem is that the press is not playing a positive role here. For whatever historical reasons, our press has not developed to the point where it can analytically look at issues, truly allow a debate where all sides are represented, and present a realistic situation so that the public mood can be affected positively.

Today, instead of creating an atmosphere of trust that would bring the private and public sectors closer together, we have collectively been responsible for drawing them further apart. We can go on with this process of witch hunting, and while believing we are doing the public good ruin the country, or we can stop and take a deep look at measures we can take that would allow us to truly join forces, in action and not in words, to get out of the crisis. History provides us with examples of nations which have followed both courses of action. The choice is ours.

LETTERS

Clarification

To the Editor:

In accordance with the freedom of the press, we would be grateful if you published the following in clarification of the report concerning the "Unaccounted U.S.\$22.5 million Petra Bank deal surfaces," published on the front page of your newspaper dated Feb. 15-16 1990.

We would obviously like the following clarification to be printed in the same place as the above-mentioned report.

The previous Petra Bank management had discounted promissory notes with foreign banks totalling U.S.\$22.5 million detailed as follows:

1. On Dec. 22, 1988, three promissory notes were discounted for a total of U.S.\$7.5 million. The net proceeds of these were credited to the Petra Bank account with Mantrust Co., New York per attached bank credit note.

2. On Jan. 23, 1989, six promissory notes were discounted for a total of U.S.\$15 million. The net proceeds of these were also credited to the Petra Bank account with Mantrust Co., New York per attached credit note.

We are surprised that your so-called "informed sources" did not mention this fact. Furthermore your so-called "informed sources" at the bank should not have leaked such biased information at this time.

These promissory notes are binding on the Petra Bank regardless of who represents the management. It is our firm belief that the "informed sources" at the bank, in leaking such information, are trying to cover-up the present management's failure in meeting their obligations in this case.

The bank in fact engaged in such trade operations extensively in the past several years totalling hundreds of millions of dollars with the knowledge of the Central Bank of Jordan. This method of funding trade is considered normal procedure in international banking.

Ahmad Chalabi

Editor's note: The above letter was facsimiled to the Jordan Times. The writer did not include his address in it.

Great country

To the Editor:

I ARRIVED eight days ago, a guest of your country, sponsored by the United States government to complete a 21-day mission to teach and improve basketball in Jordan. What a wonderful eight days it has been. I arrived knowing little about your country, but in a very short time I have come to love and respect your people. You are a kind, educated people who show a profound love for your King and a deep respect for visitors and each other. As a guest in homes, or being in constant contact with people of all ages, I now have nothing but respect for your beautiful country and its rich traditions. You are a justly proud people. Having spent a great deal of time with the youth of the nation I can assure you your country is in good hands for decades to come.

I come a stranger but in 13 days I will leave a friend. Upon return to the United States, I will proclaim to all I meet, the greatness, beauty and kindness I found across the ocean in the land called Jordan.

Coch John Weinert
 Bowling Green University,
 U.S.A.

Make haste slowly

To the Editor,

OUR hasty reaction to the Soviet decision regarding Soviet Jews and their mass immigration to Israel is again a manifestation of our naivety and superficial treatment of the sudden challenges we usually face.

We have made a loud noise that was echoed by many of our supporters; but have we come up with a pragmatic and practical proposition?

Don't we deceive ourselves and walk into the set trap when we portray the whole problem as a fear that the mass of the arriving Soviet Jews will settle in our occupied territories?

This portrayal helped our enemies to neutralise the problem. The Israeli government declared that it has no plans to settle Soviet Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Americans are demanding assurances from Israel to the same effect. The USSR is doing the same. The rest of the world will be satisfied if the newcomers are settled only in pre-1967 Israeli held areas.

Assuming this demand has been strictly adhered to what will prevent the Soviet Jews from displacing an equal willing number of non-Soviet Israelis from Tel Aviv or other Israeli towns to the occupied land? The result is the same. More Israeli expansion, more Palestinian suffering, more hatred and less chances for peace.

Why don't we rethink our strategies?

Why don't we follow Benjamin Franklin's saying "Make haste slowly"?

M. Abu Sand

Romanian ideological guru looks at revolution's roots, impact

By Edith M. Lederer
 The Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania — Silvin Brucan put it in writing two years ago: by 1990, he predicted, a new generation would be leading the Eastern bloc.

As he watched the dominoes tumble in Eastern Europe last year, the Stalinist turned dissident feared he had been wrong about his own country.

"When December came I got frightened that I have only one month. And when Dec. 22 came, I was relieved," he said, smiling broadly. "We did it."

Brucan's position in Romania is unique: the "eminence grise" of the National Salvation Front, which took power in the revolution. He resigned from its executive bureau but remains in his old large office advising on key issues and plotting the front's campaign for the May 20 general election.

Two months after the popular uprising that ended the 24-year dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu, Brucan said, the Romanian revolution is having its own impact on the two Communist giants, the Soviet Union and China.

In China, he said, millions of people whose democratic uprising in Tiananmen Square last summer was put down by the Chinese army are fixated on the success of the people's revolt in Romania that had the support from the army.

"It's a Romanian obsession in China, and that will topple them (the Communists)," Brucan said in a recent interview.

"And not only in China, I think it affected, perhaps even more so, the Soviet Union."

Before December's revolution, he said, the decisions of the last Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, including relinquishing its monopoly on power, "were inconceivable."

The 74-year-old Brucan has been a journalist, academic and ambassador to the United States from 1956-59 and the United Nations from 1959-62. Once a Stalinist and ranking party member, he broke with Ceausescu in 1965.

He was placed under house arrest in March 1989 with five other Romanians who signed an open letter criticising the dictator.

Brucan's re-emergence in revolutionary Romania has been controversial.

He has been denounced as a Stalinist, but Brucan says he rejected Stalinism long ago, and describes himself as committed to multiparty democracy.

Communist parties in Eastern Europe "are doomed to extinction," he says, by a scientific and technological revolution that has created distinct social groups and virtually destroyed the working class which has been their base of support.

In a prophetic article published in 1987 in the Boston monthly worldpaper (CO) and reprinted in the International Herald Tribune, he foresaw the collapse of the East bloc dictatorships.

"Conservative leaders clinging to economic orthodoxy face a formidable challenge that is bound to accelerate the changing of the guard. By 1990 a new political generation will be in command all over Eastern Europe," he wrote.

He theorised that the economies of the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary would be governed by the market, that Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria were moving cautiously in that direction, and that Romania "will have no choice" because of the integration of the East bloc economies.

But Brucan said the power behind Romania's revolution was totally unexpected.

"I didn't expect a popular explosion of such magnitude, especially I didn't expect the youth in Romania to have such a high political and civic conscience," he said.

As he watched the rise of Solidarity in Poland and signs of democratisation in other East bloc countries, Brucan said his main concern was trying to keep from being killed by Ceausescu.

After criticising Ceausescu over his brutal suppression of riots in Brasov in 1987, Brucan was put under house arrest. In October 1988, quite unexpectedly, he was offered a passport to go to the United States.

Fearing a trap, he said he decided to stop in London and Moscow as well "and make my name known so much interna-

tionally that the price of killing me was so high that Ceausescu could not pay."

Pressure from the United States, Britain and Soviet Union saved him from arrest on his return home in late November 1988, he said.

During his stopover in Moscow, Brucan said the Soviets made "a very reluctant" promise of support should Ceausescu fall. But he vehemently denied that there had been a conspiracy to topple the dictator, calling such reports in the Western press "trash."

"If there was a plot and we succeed... don't you think we should have boasted about it and made political capital about it?" he asked. "It would have strengthened considerably our legitimacy — and political modesty has no place, particularly at a time of revolution."

The front, a group of 150 intellectuals, workers and dissidents, at first pledged to stay out of the election but reversed itself last month. Daily demonstrations culminated in the front's agreement three weeks ago to share power with 37 political parties in a council of national unity until the election.

The most difficult thing since the revolution, Brucan said, "was to convince people to share power with the other political parties — and to get across the point... that a strong opposition is essential in a democracy. That is now over."

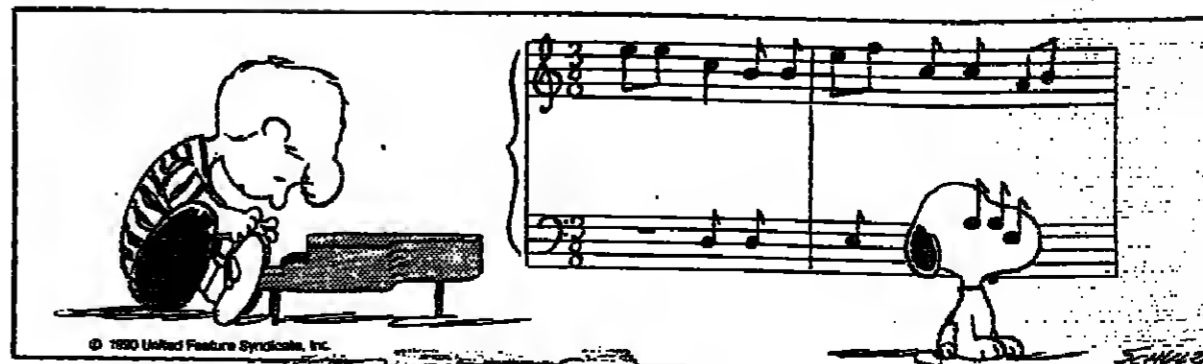
Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



مركز الصحافة

Applying and reapplying for U.S. visas

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A long line of people waiting patiently in front of the American embassy has almost become a landmark in Jabel Amman, raising curiosity among many passers-by. But for those who know, the people lined up have only one thing in mind — obtain an American visa, whether tourist, immigrant, business or student.

People start gathering in front of the American mission as early as seven in the morning on every week day, huddling in the cold, clutching documents and passports, and await their turn to enter the building and present their case.

Some of them are lucky to get a visa at the first try, and others return there with whatever papers they did not have when they first applied. Still others leave totally disappointed, never to comeback.

"My first application was turned down," said Wahid Hussein Ali Hussein, a mechanic.

"Now I am armed with all the papers they wanted: an employment certificate, a bank statement and a copy of my employer's license for an electrical maintenance shop," he told the Jordan Times as he waited for his turn.

Mohammad Ali Oheidi, another youth standing next to Hussein, was upbeat, although he did not know if he would be among the lucky ones to get a visa to the U.S.

By and large, these sentiments were echoed by most of the people in the line. For many, an American visa represents "an escape, a refuge and a chance to make better money," summed up a middle-aged man who said he was a businessman but declined to be named.

According to an official at the American consulate, there is always a sound reason why visa applications are turned down.

"The applicants have to prove to the consul that they qualify for a visa according to the parameters laid down by American law," he said. First and foremost, the ap-

plicant for a tourist or business visa has to show evidence that he or she intends to return to Jordan after the visit; a bank statement, real estate documents or certificates attesting that he or she holds a steady job in Jordan.

Many voiced complaints that the passports of rejected visa applicants were stamped by the consulate indicating that the holder's visa application has been "turned down." "This makes it difficult to reapply," commented a young girl who declined to be named.

But the consulate official, who spoke to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity, said the procedure of stamping the passport was legal under international law and that "an applicant can reapply; the refusal of an earlier application does not prejudice a second one."

According to the official, approximately 26,000 Jordanians were issued tourist visas to the U.S. last year.

Immigrants

Immigrants visas represent a

totally different story starting from applications filed months or even years ahead and winding through bureaucracy and "dozens and dozens of official documents," said a woman applicant.

Mariam Sabbi and her husband, a truck driver, said they had applied for immigrant visas so that they could work in the U.S. and "make more money."

Saud Al Manaseer, a school-teacher with a degree in telecommunications, wants to emigrate because "the economic situation in Jordan is bad. I want to get a job in the U.S. as well as pursue higher education."

Jihan Al Hindi said she wanted to join her family members who already hold "green cards" in the U.S.

The consulate official said the number of immigrant applications rose from 1,300 in 1983 to 1,600 in 1989, not a dramatic increase despite a steady rise in people seeking to emigrate to the U.S. as reported by independent observers.

"We have been working on a system of family reunification and

special job skills," said the consulate official. "Nationality is not an issue," he said referring to a quota system introduced in 1967 to replace an earlier system in force since 1952 and based on nationality. "The only limitation on nationality is that no more than 40,000 people from one country can emigrate to the U.S. in one year," the official added.

The only exception, it will appear, is Soviets. According to the American ambassador to Jordan, Roscoe Suddarth, the quota for Soviet immigrants for fiscal 1990 (October 1989 to September 1990) is 50,000, which could be raised by 20,000 under a parole and immigration programme and by another 30,000 under proposed legislation. The ambassador released these figures at a recent meeting with a group of Jordanian activists who complained that American restrictions were forcing Soviet Jewish emigrants to go to Israel and the occupied territories.

Six or seven countries, including the Philippines, India, Mexico and Jamaica, have reached the

40,000-per-year immigrant quota limit, but "none of the Arab countries has reached this mark," the consulate official told the Jordan Times.

No quotas are imposed on tourist visas, he added. But he could not provide comparative statistics from other countries.

Students

Students visas represent another category. Every application should be accompanied by a valid acceptance certificate — commonly known as Form I 20 — from an accredited American university or college, and evidence that the applicant has sufficient financial means to pay for the expenses of his/her education. In addition, the applicant should also have an "acceptable academic record," the official said.

The official could not provide any figure on people who "abuse" their tourist or student visas and opt to stay on in the United States. "No records or figures are available in this context," he said.

Randa Habib's Corner

Strikomania

IMAGINE this: At one of Amman's homes the wife asks her husband over breakfast to return early from work so as to go together on a shopping spree, one of Ammanites' most entertaining outdoor "sports".

"Sorry, I will not be able to come back by lunch time and I don't think I will make it back home before the evening," the well-dressed executive tells his wife.

"Heaps of work on your desk?" she exclaims. "No, actually, the company is on strike." The conversation ends here, an indication to the recent wave of sit-ins in Jordan, home to nearly 100,000 unemployed.

It seems that sit-ins and strikes are the latest "democratic" fashion that recently hit Amman. Scores of employees, labourers and students, enjoying a recent blow of "glasnost" have organised the once "taboo" sit-ins as means of public pressure to achieve their demands.

From Petra Bank employees, who demanded long-sought wage increases, to the students of the Arab Community college, who wanted decreased tuition fees, sit-in "fever" seems to have snowballed to the extent that protests became the "first defensive line" for settling disputes rather than legal arbitration.

The sudden outbreak of "strikomania", however, could be attributed to the lack of "safety valves" or legal outlets over the past three decades when the margin of freedom of expression was virtually non-existent.

The right to strike, albeit sacred, could be all the more productive if it was based on realistic grounds and, moreover, if it took into account the current economic state of affairs in the country. It is obvious that Jordan's austerity budget is barely meeting the growing demands of the people's basic needs, let alone those of strike enthusiasts.

Why the secrecy?

By Vladimir Postogarov

Speaking at the USSR Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow in June, Mikhail Gorbachev for the first time ever revealed the country's defence spending. Soon afterwards, the Soviet press gave the details of the military budget's structure. Prime Minister Ryzhikov revealed the Soviet Union's foreign debt in his speech at the Congress. This, too, was done for the first time. The Soviet space shuttle Buran has been on show at Le Bourget in France. The Soviet press now widely publishes information which, until recently was prohibited: the crime situation, number of people entering and leaving the country, and many other things. Down come the ramparts of secrecy, which the command and administrative system had built up for decades. The writer is a member of the Association of Soviet Lawyers; and the article is reprinted from the Soviet magazine, Culture and Life.

SECRECY was inherent in the command and administrative system. It cemented the system and hid its mechanism from the eyes of the people. Total secrecy lay as a heavy burden on our economy and public life. It assisted the deformation of the relationship between the society and the state and alienated the citizen from the state. Secrecy fenced the Soviet Union off from international life and prevented it from actively participating in scientific and technological exchanges and the international division sustained enormous intellectual and material losses and earned the reputation of a closed society, which hid its plans and ideas.

Excessive secrecy, in the meantime, is not the fruit of a well-planned government policy. It is the other way round, the consequence of the absence of such a policy. I want to say from a lawyer's point of view that the dictat of secrecy was fostered by the absence of a clear-cut legal foundation. Distinct from the U.S., France, Britain, China, Poland and other countries, the Soviet Union never had laws to protect state secrets. Everything was placed in the hands of the executive authorities, to be more precise, in the hands of numerous ministries and departments, who cut off political, military, foreign policy and other information, at will. No wonder that the sphere of secrecy broadened to unjustifiable proportions while the process of making something secret often assumed a formal and subjective nature.

At one time detailed maps of Moscow were not even sold in the Soviet Union, and were only available in the West. The situation persisted in spite of the fact that modern technology makes it very easy to take the necessary photographs from outer space.

Perestroika demands ever more insistently that the entire system of protecting state secrets be reorganised. In my view, a State Secrets Protection Act could become a basic lever in such a fundamental reorganisation. Adoption of such an act would place the protection of state secrets on a definite legal foundation. Like the laws on publicity, the press and state security, the content of this law must fit into the framework of the political reform and the shaping of a legal socialist state.

Preparation of a State Secrets Protection Law poses many complicated problems and requires alternative variants as well as a comprehensive approach. Its adoption would inevitably entail changes in economic, civil, criminal and administrative legislation and may start a trend in legal reform. It transpires from numerous debates between lawyers that the entire regime of secrecy in a law-regulated socialist state must proceed from the presumption that information is generally available. In other words, the regime of secrecy may involve only such information that the law has designated as a state secret. Restricting information

arbitrarily is as unlawful as disclosing a state secret. That is why it is my opinion that hiding information under the cover of a state secret, when it is not secret, should be punished and punishment should be especially severe if it caused economic or ecological losses or the violation of the legal interests of labour collectives, individual citizens or public organisations. In general, the protection of state secrets cannot be used as a cover for actions violating the rights of citizens, offered them by the Constitution of the USSR.

It is very important to separate production, commercial and official secrets from state secrets. We still classify all these things as state secrets, whose divulgence is considered as espionage or betrayal of the country. This practice harms our society and contradicts the very spirit of perestroika.

There is urgent need to establish a national body for the protection of state secrets. It is now generally thought that the State Security Committee (KGB) is such a body, but this is not true. The secrecy stamps are established by ministries and departments, who often take their own view of state secrets, which accords with their departmental interests. State secrets protect the vital important interests of the Soviet people, but the protection of such secrets does not yet rest on the foundation of a clear-cut policy and efficient organisation. According to a Russian saying, a

child is apt to lose an eye when it has as many as seven nurses.

The restructuring of the government's secrecy policy is closely connected with the USSR's foreign policy activities, which are based on new thinking and, specifically, on the principle of openness. There have been a series of large-scale Soviet proposals, during the past few years, concerning the consolidation of peace and security, the development of cooperation and understanding between peoples. The proposals range from stage-by-stage liquidation of nuclear arsenals, the reduction of conventional arms to the limits of reasonable sufficiency, the strengthening of the U.N. and the more efficient use of its mechanisms, the political settlement of regional conflicts to the construction of a European home.

Realisation of these initiatives will narrow areas of secrecy in inter-governmental relations and establish a climate of trust between them as well as a sense of security. The reorganisation of the system of protecting state secrets of the USSR is part of this overall process. It must specifically offer greater elbow-room on the world market for Soviet enterprises and remove excessive obstacles to the establishment of joint and mixed enterprises.

People's diplomacy, which binds millions together with relations based on trust, plays a great role in bringing nations together and removing enemy images. People's diplomacy has no secrets and its openness substantially influences the shaping of modern international relationships.

Through cultural exchanges, reciprocal visits of delegations and contacts between citizens as well as the organisation of exhibitions and other initiatives, the Union of Soviet Friendship Societies helps broad sections of the foreign public to get a true picture of life in the USSR and the Soviet people to learn the truth about life abroad. People's diplomacy destroys the ramparts of unfoundedness and suspicion, of hostility and fear.

Robert Mitchum prepares for his first TV comedy series

By Ronald Clarke
Reuter

LOS ANGELES — Robert Mitchum looks bored. He sprawls in his chair and looks as if he is back playing private investigator Philip Marlowe, waiting to be beaten up on page 20 of the script.

"Are you still getting the hard-boiled detective roles?" A reporter asks.

The heavily lidded eyes flicker. "Well, not for the last two days I haven't, no," Mitchum says.

"Why are you doing a television series?"

"That's what I do for a living. I'm a professional actor. Meat is meat."

"Why a television series now?" Nobody ever asked me before.

"You never got any scripts?" "Okay, I lied."

Mitchum, the star of more than 100 films, has made a dramatic switch in his career and, at 72, will star in his first half-hour television series, portraying a cantankerous old man who is befriended by four orphaned children.

The NBC network describes the series, Regular Joe, as a light-hearted family comedy about a homeless curmudgeon. Mitchum, a well-read man who has written film scripts, music and poetry, had been brought to a news conference to publicise the series.

He is at ease talking on any subject as long as the subject is not Robert Mitchum.

"Mr. Mitchum, do you watch any situation comedies?"

"No."

"Did you watch your series 'War and Remembrance' when it was on the air?"

"No."

"Mr. Mitchum, how long since you've done comedy?"

"Oh, probably 'The Grass is Greener,' I think."

"When was that?"

"I have no idea," Mitchum mutters.

Mitchum allows that he is confident he will not have to work



Robert Mitchum

the long hours demanded of many television series.

"Not if you're working with children," he said with a trace of a smile. "The social department won't permit them to work too long."

Mitchum also lets on that one of the things he likes about appearing in "regular Joe" is that he will not have to wear makeup.

"I don't think I've worn makeup in 99 per cent of my film appearances," he said. "As long as they don't have to put a scar on me or turn my hair green I don't wear makeup."

Mitchum, who has earned the reputation — despite his repeated denials — of being one of the best actors in Hollywood, becomes more animated when he is asked how he prepared himself for his role as a homeless person.

"I had a little experience in those conditions myself," he remembered. "I was 15 years old. They had a ready answer then for the homeless. They gave me 180 days on a chain gang."

"We'll find a home for you, boy," they said.

"I was without a home and

broke. As far as they were concerned I was a dangerous and suspicious character with no visible means of support. I was in Chatham County, Georgia."

"I left home because there was no room at the table. I didn't make a head count. I just took off because there wasn't enough to go around. I felt I might alleviate the situation if I made myself scarce."

"I think it cost them 38 cents a day to feed and house you at the time and they rented you out for \$2 and 50 cents a day. That was the answer then to the homeless."

Mitchum jumped on a freight train and headed for Hollywood — and stardom. He has been married to the same woman, the former Dorothy Spence, for 50 years and they have three children.

Asked if he has any favourite roles, Mitchum pauses.

"I was asked to play Admiral Halsey in a picture called Midway," he said. "I asked the producer how long the role would last. He said: 'It's one day in bed.' I said: 'You got it.'"

Peres doubts Shamir's moves

(Continued from page 1)

within 10 days if Shamir's government falls.

Peres also told the AP that if he forms a new government, he will continue to back the Israeli elections plan rather seek a new peace formula.

"If there was a new government it would stay with the current approach," Peres said.

Baker's compromise on the composition of a Palestinian delegation calls for including Palestinians from Arab Jerusalem and some expelled by the Israeli authorities in preliminary Cairo peace talks. Israeli newspapers said.

They also call for Egypt to announce the names of the delegates and for the agenda to be left open to allow Palestinians to bring up subjects other than the elections.

Including Palestinians from Jerusalem has been a major sticking point for Likud, which fears such a move would undercut Israel's claim to the city as its "capital."

"I'm not sure East Jerusalem is the only issue," Peres said. "They (Likud) think it's the wrong way to go."

Likud fears that some of the proposals could lead to indirect involvement by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). It also opposes any land-for-peace settlement, which both the United States and Labour Party would accept.

Israeli reports said Israel's "forum of four" leaders — Peres,

Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens — would convene Friday to discuss Baker's proposals.

Shamir's spokesman Avi Pazner denied any meeting was yet scheduled and said Shamir "still hasn't decided" his position on the American ideas.

Likud in fight

Pazner acknowledged that Shamir was under pressure from Likud hawks but insisted the prime minister was in control.

"He has difficulties in the party but knows he has a massive majority," Pazner told the AP.

Pazner also insisted that Sharon, who chairs the party's 3,070-member central committee, cannot convene the body with Shamir's agreement.

But Israeli newspapers said Sharon plans to go ahead with a session early next week with or without Shamir.

Even Shamir's supporters in Likud voiced concern about the in-fighting.

Asked on army radio whether Shamir was still the party's unquestioned leader, legislator Benjamin Begin, the son of former Premier Menachem Begin, said: "That is a question that needs examination."

Begin also appealed for Likud unity to prevent a Labour-dominated coalition from emerging.

"We are walking a thin rope," Begin said. "We cannot just say we are tired, run away, and let Mr. Peres conduct the matter."

Mandela: No early concessions

(Continued from page 1)

to participate in the initial stages of the talks risked prosecution for offenses not covered by the ending of a 30-year ban on the ANC and other restrictions.

Mandela said the refusal to accommodate the ANC demands showed "it is quite clear the government is not yet prepared to meet us."

Mandela, 71, freed by de Klerk as part of sweeping reforms, defended his support for Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who arrived in Zambia

Tuesday to meet with him.

He challenged South Africa's powerful Jewish community to "face the truth squarely."

"I believe there are many similarities between our struggle and that of the PLO. We live under a unique form of colonialism in South Africa as well as in Israel," he said.

Mandela also defended the ANC's call for continued economic sanctions pressure the Pretoria government into taking substantive steps to dismantle apartheid.

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Arab Monetary Fund plans ambitious boost for Arab stock markets

ABU DHABI (R) — The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) announced Wednesday a plan to develop Arab stock markets, which it believes is the best way to stop large amounts of needed capital flowing out of the region.

"The AMF has embarked on an ambitious project to develop Arab stock markets... as a prelude to setting up a joint Arab exchange that will complement the existing ones," the Abu Dhabi-based fund said in a statement.

The AMF said it would create a stock data base, indices and a unified law to govern existing markets.

The data base, which should be ready this year, would publish monthly information on share moves and companies and be distributed to brokers and investment houses, it said.

The data base would cover Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

In the GCC, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman have official exchanges while Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have all said they intend to establish their own. Local officials, however, have said they are in no hurry.

AMF officials said they discussed the fund's plan with countries involved over the last year and they urged those without official floors to set them up soon.

"Arab stockmarkets now are relatively dull. They need to be developed to encourage local investors and attract overseas funds," the statement said.

"We would like to expand our base to include more Arab states but it seems there is no interest, at the moment, from some states," an AMF official said.

In countries such as Libya, Syria, South and North Yemen, Somalia and Mauritania, the public sector accounts for up to 90 per cent of economic activity. Iraq has recently sold some state firms to the public but this has been limited. Sudan's economy is not developed enough for a market.

Elsewhere, Arab investors themselves are limited in what

Turkish lira nears full convertibility

ANKARA (R) — The Turkish lira has moved closer to full convertibility with a new easing of foreign exchange regulations, but the IMF may seek further relaxation, bankers say.

They said International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials were likely to approve of Monday's lifting of restrictions of foreign exchange purchases from banks.

Ankara Monday also freed business-purpose foreign exchange transfers abroad of up to a limit of \$5 million and purchases of foreign securities by Turks or foreigners living in Turkey.

"Turkey is pursuing the right policies at the right time. It is doing what needs to be done (to achieve full convertibility)," said Ibrahim Betti, general manager of Garanti Bankasi A.S.

"The lira is not today a widely-traded currency. But if the IMF decides it is convertible, this may enhance confidence in the lira," said a senior Western monetary source who asked not to be named.

"Still, such a decision will take some time," he added.

Bankers said the IMF sees bilateral trade agreements with Iran and Iraq, both IMF members, as hindrances to full convertibility of the lira.

"I think we should not harm our country's interests for the sake of pleasing the IMF," Betti told Reuters. "If we lose our Iran market, shall we find a similar market in the U.S.? No, because the U.S. is imposing quotas on our textile products."

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Yasuda to open office in Bahrain

BAHRAIN (R) — Japan's Yasuda Fire and Marine Insurance Company has been granted a licence to open a representative office in Bahrain, the island's commerce ministry said Wednesday. They said Yasuda would be the fifth foreign insurance firm with a representative office on the island. There are also 38 offshore insurance companies, 12 foreign companies with local licences and nine local insurance firms.

ARIG to set up London subsidiary

BAHRAIN (R) — The Bahrain-based Arab Insurance Group (ARIG) said Wednesday it planned to set up a subsidiary in London with an authorised capital of more than \$34 million. An ARIG spokesman said the subsidiary, which would initially be entirely owned by the parent firm, would be better placed to capture excess business from the European and American markets. He said it would handle traditional and specialist insurance and reinsurance business, but declined to give further details pending approval from British licensing authorities. ARIG, one of the Arab World's largest insurance firms, made a record net profit of \$29.5 million in 1989. It was established in 1980 by the governments of Kuwait, Libya and the United Arab Emirates which have equal stakes.

World Bank lends Morocco \$104m

RABAT (R) — The World Bank has lent Morocco \$104 million to upgrade health services, the official news agency MAP has said. The 20-year loan with a five-year grace period carries variable interest rates, now around seven per cent.

Iran to sell China leather worth \$4m

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran will export \$4 million worth of leather to China, according to an agreement signed in Tehran Wednesday, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The agency, monitored in Nicosia, said the agreement was signed by Shahram Hariri, a departmental head at Iran's National Industrial Group, and the director general of China's Import-Export Agency, Li Zhi Wei. IRNA said Li arrived in Tehran at the head of a delegation Saturday to discuss expansion of economic ties with Iranian officials. China was one of Iran's largest arms suppliers during the eight-year Gulf war. Since the August 1988 ceasefire, China has become one of Tehran's major trade partners.

Petrofina, Libya sign contract

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Petrofina S.A., Belgium's biggest oil, gas, and petrochemical concern has signed an oil exploration and production sharing agreement in Libya, the company announced Tuesday. Petrofina said in a statement its subsidiary Fina Exploration Libya agreed with the Libyan National Oil Corporation to drill at least 12 exploratory wells and execute 8,500 kilometres of seismic tests during a six-year period. The contract would require investment of \$100 million by Petrofina, newspapers reported. The deal covers 15,736 square kilometres in the Syrte basin, southeast of Zuefina. The agreement is still subject to ratification by the Libyan authorities, the Petrofina statement said.

French oil imports from Iran surge

PARIS (R) — Iran accounted for 12 per cent of France's total crude oil imports in 1989, jumping from one per cent in 1988 after the French government ended its embargo on Iranian imports, French industry figures showed. The Petrol Industry Association said in its annual commentary on the French market that the Middle East supplied nearly half of France's crude imports, up from 32 per cent in 1988, largely as a result of the revival in trade with Iran. Iran was France's largest supplier in mid-1987 when Paris imposed the trade ban after the two countries broke diplomatic ties. The embargo was fully lifted in December 1988.

British current account gap much worse than expected

LONDON (R) — Britain announced monthly trade figures Wednesday much worse than market expectations but the pound sterling and share prices rebounded after a brief fall. The data showed a deficit on the current account, the widest measure of Britain's foreign trade, was £1.88 billion (\$3.16 billion), more than double a revised £817 million (\$1.37 billion) gap for December. Economists had been forecasting a current account deficit of around £1.3 billion (\$2.2 billion) for January. The Central Statistical Office (CSO) said Britain's monthly current account figures were proving erratic and suggested trends over three months portrayed a more accurate picture. The CSO attributed the size of the January gap to a deficit in what it called erratic items, where a small surplus would have been expected.

Kenya to manufacture vehicles

NAIROBI (R) — Kenya President Daniel Arap Moi has announced details of what will be his country's first locally made cars and a pick-up truck. A "reputable, international company" would be contracted to produce the vehicles, he said, but he declined to name it or say precisely when output of the vehicles — the cars will be called the Nyayo Pioneer 1 and 2 and the truck the Pioneer 3 — would start. "The government has set aside land for a factory and an assembly line to mass-produce the Kenyan made car and pick-up vehicles soon," Moi said.

U.S. GNP improves

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy grew by 0.9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1989, faster than previously estimated but still the slowest pace in more than three years, the government said Wednesday.

The Commerce Department said its revised estimate of October-December growth means the gross national product (GNP) — the nation's total output of goods and services — rose three per cent for all of 1989.

That was the slowest yearly advance since a 2.7 per cent gain in 1986 and followed a 4.4 per cent increase in 1988.

The fourth-quarter gain was stronger than the initial report last month of 0.5 per cent growth, but was still the lowest since a 0.8 per cent advance in the third quarter of 1986.

A consensus of economists has indicated in advance of the new report that fourth-quarter growth would be lowered to 0.4 per cent.

The improvement should ease fears the economy had entered a downturn at year's end, although there is considerable anxiety over the months ahead.

The department will make one more revision in the GNP — the broadest measure of the nation's economic health — after more solid information is available next month.

A recession usually is defined as to consecutive quarterly declines in the GNP. The last decline was a one-quarter drop of 1.8 per cent in 1982, after which the economy resumed growth. The last recession occurred in 1981-82.

Since then, the economic expansion has continued for 87 months and in November broke the peacetime growth record. If it continues through October 1991, it will set a new overall record.

An inflation index tied to the GNP rose at an annual rate of 3.5 per cent last year, the report said. That was revised downward from a 4.5 per cent hike reported initially.

Some economists, including chairman Michael Boskin of President George Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, had attributed the sluggishness in the fourth quarter in part to the effect of the fourth coldest December on record, hurricane Hugo and the San Francisco Bay-area earthquake.

Most of the upward revision was attributed to a better-than-anticipated trade performance. The December trade deficit was not available when the advance GNP estimate was made.

The new report said exports climbed at an annual rate of 8.6 per cent in the fourth quarter, compared with the advance estimate of 4.9 per cent. Imports grew by two per cent in the revised report instead of 7.5 per cent first reported.

Business inventories, meanwhile, were lowered from an initial 48.9 per cent increase to a 19.6 per cent gain Wednesday.

Other changes included personal consumption, up 0.4 per cent rather than the 0.1 per cent decline first reported.

But business investment declined 6.4 per cent in the latest estimate.

Mauritius plans to broaden offshore financial business

PORT LOUIS (R) — The Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, hoping to become a financial centre for Africa, has announced plans to broaden the range of its offshore financial activities.

Finance Minister Vishnu Lutchmearaidoo told reporters Tuesday the government was preparing legislation which would open up offshore facilities for portfolio management companies, insurance firms, wealth management companies and international trade specialists.

Central bank governor Indur Ramphul was drawing up a bill which would be put before parliament in April, he added.

Mauritius issued a first round of licences to offshore banks last year. Lutchmearaidoo said the enhanced facilities were aimed at persuading Japanese and other Asian firms use the island as a gateway for doing business with Africa.

He said he had promoted this idea on a tour of Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore and had received several enquiries.

"We have told them (the Japanese) they can't be absent from Mauritius, from Africa. And their presence in Africa, and must pass through Mauritius, the gateway to Africa," he said.

Lutchmearaidoo stressed that the planned offshore centre would not be a just a tax haven and he insisted that it would not become a channel for laundering drug money either.

"We want a credible offshore centre, serious and professional. Mauritius is not going to sell off to any institution that wants to do business here," he added.

Seven banks have applied so far for a licence to operate under Mauritius's year-old offshore banking regulations, which enable banks to accept deposits from and make loans to foreign clients on favourable tax terms and without exchange controls.

But so far only Barclays Bank of Britain is fully operational under the scheme.

Reserves slice Generale Bank profits

BRUSSELS (R) — Generale Bank, Belgium's leading bank, said Wednesday its net profits plunged by almost two thirds last year because of big provisions to give it 100 per cent cover against loans to Third World debtor countries.

Generale, banking arm of the Societe Generale De Belgique industrial and financial conglomerate, announced group net profit slumps to 2.6 billion francs (\$74 million) from 7.45 billion (\$213 million in 1988).

Behind the drop was a decision to make full provisions against loans to 44 countries, including Brazil, Mexico and Poland, instead of only 50 per cent cover as in 1988.

"We are now coming out of a long tunnel we have been struggling in since May, 1982 when Mexico first had difficulty," Generale Chairman Paul Emmanuel Janssen said.

Janssen said the provisions had cost it 9.2 billion francs (\$262 million). Leading British and American banks have also sliced into their profits by boosting their reserves against possible non-payment of loans to indebted countries.

Because of the profit drop Generale said it would keep its after-tax dividend to shareholders unchanged at 265 francs per share (\$7.6).

Generale decided to wipe the slate clean of problem debt now because many of the 44 countries look like continuing to have problems paying interest.

Janssen said the bank also took

the action to increase its flexibility in the future and he said there were tax advantages.

"We have no loans outstanding to borrowers who have made international headlines," he said. Janssen held out the hope that if the situation improves, some of the money set aside for risky loans could be recovered.

The Generale chief denied, as some banking analysts have suggested, that the bank took the bitter medicine now because it did not want to report big profits just as it was negotiating with Belgian unions to cut its workforce.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------|--|
| One Sterling | 1.6855/65 | U.S. dollars | |
| One U.S. dollar | 1.1900/10 | Canadian dollar | |
| | 1.6910/17 | Deutschmarks | |
| | 1.9055/65 | Dutch guilders | |
| | 1.4873/80 | Swiss francs | |
| | 35.21/26 | Belgian francs | |
| | 5.7200/50 | French francs | |
| | 1250/1251 | Italian lire | |
| | 148.65/75 | Japanese yen | |
| | 6.1140/90 | Swedish crowns | |
| | 6.5145/95 | Norwegian crowns | |
| | 6.5000/50 | Danish crowns | |
| One ounce of gold | 409.20/409.70 | U.S. dollars | |

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Wednesday, February 28, 1990

Central Bank official rates

| | Buy | Sell | | Buy | Sell |
|----------------|--------|--------|------------------------|-------|-------|
| U.S. dollar | 670.1 | 674.0 | Japanese yen (for 100) | 451.3 | 453.4 |
| Pound Sterling | 1130.6 | 1137.4 | Dutch guilder | 351.3 | 353.4 |
| Deutschmark | 285.9 | 288.3 | Swedish crown | 109.5 | 110.2 |
| Swiss franc | 451.2 | 453.9 | Italian lira (for 100) | 53.6 | 53.9 |
| French franc | 116.9 | 117.6 | Belgian franc (for 10) | 190.1 | 191.2 |

HOROSCOPE

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 1, 1990

GENERAL TENDENCIES: One of the best days for deciding what conditions in your life need modernizing and updating and to study ways to uncover specific means by which this can be easily accomplished.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Look for some new and unusual friendships to come into your life any moment now. Your romantic life will be very cooperative at this time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Help family members now make your home more attractive. Do the thoughtful little things your attachment desires of you.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Listen to good advice given to you now by a practical-minded friend. There is considerable happiness in your romantic mood now.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A charming lady friend will aid you to solve a difficult problem. Control the temptation to dictate to your attachment.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't make any temporary changes at your residence. Much conversation with your attachment will bring a much clearer understanding.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Pay your share promptly of any entertainment you enjoy with

friends. A good day to be away from your home as much as possible.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Entertaining today will bring you and friends much happiness. Your most constructive activity can be in home affairs today.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't be so closed in but make new acquaintances who can later become good friends. You are entering a new phase of your relationship with your attachment.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Accept an invitation of much importance from a charming man. A condition you have not understood at home is at last being solved.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You now see clearly what is needed in practical ways to establish more harmony at home. Get off alone with attachment for a wonderful romantic time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Cultivate different types of friends now. Invite everyone available into your home and late discriminate among them.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Older friends will render you the best helpfulness today, so join with them. Don't be disappointed that a family jant does not materialize.

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A day to go after both long time desired hopes and wishes as well as more recent aims that have been coursing through your consciousness. A new start for romantic well being is indicated.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A stranger will now join your social activities to add to your good times. Go with family now to make calls and visits on close companions.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be prepared for an incoming change in your social structure. Accept and go along with family's ideas for improving home.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get the aid of two good and efficient friends to suggest ways to improve your social activities. At home, entertain men and younger persons.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Try to cooperate more harmoniously with those who dwell in your home. Revisit some interesting new recreations for your attachment.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Bright and alert friends will bring you fun and entertainment today. You need to have outside recreations from home to cheer you up.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A trip with a delightful friend could bring satisfactory results. A

better understanding can now be brought into being between you and your family.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) It is your turn to take initiative in social matters with friends. Listen to and go along with original and unusual plans desired by your attachment.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You need to have a greater awareness of those who dwell beneath your own roof. This applies also to stated wishes of your own attachment.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Friends will charm and bring you happy times today. Accept invitations. Arrange your attachment's time now as best fits your joint needs.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Combine your efforts with those of experience or good judgement to improve your residence. A wonderful day for an emotional time with your attachment.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take family to meet influential personalities today. Discussions today will be productive of wonderful results.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Two good friends will give you best ideas you have received in a long time. Lots of interesting activity will take place at your dwelling.

THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas

ACROSS

- 1 Ribbon
- 5 Criticizes
- 10 Yield (with "in")
- 14 — no good
- 15 Guide
- 16 Eyeliner
- 17 Center or trot
- 18 Actor-comic
- 20 Pretense
- 21 Turn
- 22 Festidious
- 23 Computes
- 24 Haekman
- 25 Dance
- 26 Sword handle
- 27 Post Hughes
- 31 Mended
- 33 Gambling game
- 34 Time
- 35 Soviet sea
- 36 Spurious
- 37 Sky Bear
- 38 — like —
- 39 Cameron's neighbor
- 40 George of
- 41 Intense
- 43 Lyra's
- 44 Part of BPOE
- 45 Withdrew
- 46 Glasses
- 51 Island near Guernsey
- 52 Hinder
- 53 Skinny leaf
- 54 Reconnais
- 56 End
- 57 Fiber plant
- 58 Vicinity
- 59 Yokod pair
- 60 Symbol
- 61 Seed

DOWN

- 1 Dietary no-no
- 2 Swifty
- 3 Herb with white flowers
- 4 Before head or foot
- 5 Dash
- 6 Property claims
- 7 "Hawkeye"
- 8 Multitude
- 9 Coeds
- 10 Shrewd ones
- 11 Eng. river
- 12 Outlier
- 13 Effortless
- 14 Eng. river
- 15 Outlier
- 16 Actor-comic
- 17 Center or trot
- 18 Actor-comic
- 19 Turn
- 20 Pretense
- 21 Turn
- 22 Festidious
- 23 Computes
- 24 Haekman
- 25 Dance
- 26 Sword handle
- 27 Post Hughes
- 31 Mended
- 33 Gambling game
- 34 Time
- 35 Soviet sea
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- 51 Island near Guernsey
- 52 Hinder
- 53 Skinny leaf
- 54 Reconnais
- 56 End
- 57 Fiber plant
- 58 Vicinity
- 59 Yokod pair
- 60 Symbol
- 61 Seed

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| GRACE ALAN TRIM | 42 Convert into | 48 Dispute |
| MAVIE HARE HALL | 43 cash | 49 Lease |
| STEFANOWSKI OVAL | 44 Roadway's | 50 Santa — |
| RENNARD TRAFFIC | 45 Ben | 51 Pierre's loc. |
| TORY BRAS | 46 Balm | 54 Super or |
| SPARKY PARTHENS | 47 Zealous | 55 Joker |
| EMMETT PARRIS | 48 Reverie | |
| ARTE IRON MEERS | | |
| MESDAMES PASSED | | |
| SILVA BRAS | | |
| PAPAGE MARIA TIRE | | |
| ANGEL GIMMETER | | |
| PAPA TUD ARAD | | |
| ETIED OLIO NORD | | |

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

"I just had a little heart-to-heart talk with the bathroom scales."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Amigd and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TUCEA

RAWAY

FLOWY

DINKLY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answers tomorrow.

Yesterday's Jumbles: CRUSH BALMY INMATE MOHAR Answer: You're expected to make it in a hurry — FASTE.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Italian community vs. Arab Insurance

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arab Life & Accident Insurance Co. soccer team will meet the Italian community soccer team in a friendly soccer match to be played at the University of Jordan stadium in Amman Friday March 2 at 2.30 p.m. This event is sponsored by the ALITALIA (Italian airlines) who provided the Italian team with their outfits flown specially from Rome. The game is arranged jointly by the Italian embassy and Arab Life & Accident Insurance Co., where the employees, their families and all their friends are expected to turn up and support their team.

Egypt pulls out of African cup

ALGIERS (R) — An Egyptian soccer official said Tuesday that Egypt was pulling out of the African Nations Cup tournament which opens in Algeria Friday, the official Algerian news agency APS reported. It quoted the chairman of Egypt's youth and sports council, who is heading a delegation that arrived in Algiers Tuesday, as saying the decision had nothing to do with the organization of the competition. APS gave no other explanation and did not identify the official by name.

Winds, rain force cancellation of events

LONDON (AP) — Rain, high winds and flooding caused havoc with British sports schedules Tuesday, knocking out soccer matches and all three horse-race cards. The English Football League match between first-division rivals Liverpool and Derby was called off when police said wind gusts up to 80 miles per hour made it too dangerous to stage the game at Liverpool's Anfield Stadium. An FA Cup rematch between West Ham and Oldham in northern England, scheduled for Wednesday night, was postponed until March 10 after winds knocked down a 40-yard section of perimeter fence at Oldham's Boundary Park. Other matches in lower divisions were postponed throughout England and Scotland because of the storms, which started Monday and were not expected to let up until late in the week. Racing was cancelled at Steeplechase meetings in Nottingham, Southwell and Plumpton, and officials at Leopardstown said Wednesday's card was endangered because of a forecast of strong winds.

Atletico sacks coach

MADRID (R) — Atletico Madrid sacked coach Javier Clemente Tuesday after a weekend defeat by Osasuna left them eight points behind Spanish first division leaders Real Madrid. "Atletico cannot be satisfied with being second," club president Jesus Gil Y Gil told a news conference. "Clemente and I are no longer friends." "I would have liked to end the season and win all 11 games left," said Clemente, who has been in charge since the beginning of the season. "But some in the club may not like that." Gil Y Gil said he had not yet decided on a replacement for Clemente.

Welsh to double drug testing funds

CARDIFF, Wales (AP) — Welsh sports officials, stung when two of their athletes were found using drugs at the Commonwealth Games, said Tuesday they would begin out-of-competition testing and double anti-drug spending. The sports council for Wales and weightlifting and other sports it considered to be high-risk for drugs would be targeted. Spending for the programme could be increased to £60,000 (\$102,000) a year. Two Welsh weightlifters, Ricky Chaplin and Gareth Hives, flunked drug tests at the games in Auckland, New Zealand, last month. The council said it wanted to "completely stamp out drug abuse in sport in the principality." Welsh athletes generally compete internationally as part of British teams.

Mancini ousted from tournament

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands (AP) — Sweden's unseeded Thomas Hogstedt ousted second-seed Alberto Mancini of Argentina 6-7, 6-4, 6-2 Tuesday in the \$475,000 ABN tennis tournament. In other matches Tuesday, number seven seed Jonas B. Svensson of Sweden defeated Dutchman Tom Nijssen 6-4, 6-2; and American Brad Gilbert defeated Andrei Cherkasov of the Soviet Union 7-5, 4-6, 6-4. Karel Novacek of Czechoslovakia beat Per Nyborg of Sweden 7-6, 7-6; Uruguay's Nicolas Pereira beat Mark Koevermans of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-2; and West Germany's Carl-Uwe Steeb defeated Christian Pioline of France 6-4, 6-4.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH
1989 Tribune Media Services Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠72 AK2 AQJ983 ♣63
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 Pass 1 Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q104 1073 KQ876 ♣K5
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 Pass 1 Pass
1 NT Pass ?
What action do you take?
- Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠943 AKJ 1109 ♣9843
Partner opens the bidding with one club. What do you respond?
- Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠QJ103 AK AKQ32 ♣K8
What is your opening bid?
- Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠J7 7KQJ763 ♣K108 ♣Q3
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 Pass 1 Pass
1 NT Pass ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AK6 710 ♣K93 ♣QJ9643
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 Pass 1 Pass
2 Pass 2 Pass
What do you bid now?



Ivan Lendl

Lendl returns home ending six years of absence

PRAGUE, Czechoslovakia (AP) — A celebrity-studded audience watched Ivan Lendl defeat Miloslav Mecir 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 Tuesday in a benefit match for civic forum, an opposition group that led November's anti-communist revolution.

Vadec Havel, Czechoslovakia's playwright-turned president, sat next to Alexander Dubcek, the new president of parliament who had been disgraced by the former communist government for trying to institute reforms in 1968.

The two, along with Premier Marian Calfa, applauded Lendl's crushing forehand groundstrokes and Mecir's unpredictable passing shots.

Lendl's appearance ended six years of absence in his country. Communist authorities had driven him out in 1982 by dictating his tour schedule and imposing unrealistic demands for Davis Cup appearances.

Before the match, Lendl told reporters he wanted to compete for the United States in the 1992 Olympics.

"I should become a U.S. citizen in April 1992, still in time for Olympic nomination, and I'd like to play very much. It should be a dream for every athlete," Lendl said.

He also dashed Czechoslovak hopes of playing for his home country against the United States in the forthcoming Davis Cup tie March 30.

Stating that he spent less than two weeks in Czechoslovakia over the last 10 years, Lendl said "it's not right to play against a country whose citizenship I should get in two years."

About his battles with Czechoslovak tennis officials, Lendl said: "I was never a fan of the old system and on top of that I was largely misled by the authorities. I felt cheated."

Czechoslovak and American flags adorned the sports hall in downtown Prague, packed with 16,000 spectators who paid 120 crowns (\$12) — the equivalent of 5 per cent of an average Czechoslovak monthly salary — to watch Lendl.

Navratilova remains unbeaten

INDIAN WELLS, California (AP) — Top-seeded Martina Navratilova remained unbeaten in 1990 by overpowering Nicole Provis of Australia 6-2, 6-0 Tuesday in a second-round match of the \$350,000 Virginia Slims of Indian Wells tournament.

Navratilova, playing in her third tournament of the year, needed only 49 minutes to dispose of the 20-year-old Provis. "I was anxious to be playing outdoors," said Navratilova, whose victories in Chicago and Washington earlier this year both came indoors. "I practiced yesterday to try to get used to the outdoors. This surface is pretty slow. It's like sandpaper."

"I know she (Provis) has played well in the past. I just kept going for it, trying to make something happen, and I did."

There was only one upset Tuesday — seventh-seeded Larisa Savchenko of the Soviet Union was beaten by Etsuko Inoue of Japan 6-4, 6-1 in another second-round match.

In other second-round action, second-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain defeated Cammy Macgregor 6-1, 6-2 in just 53 minutes; third-seeded Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia rallied for a 4-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-0 victory over Monika Javer of Great Britain; fourth-seeded Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia blitzed Yukie Koizumi of Japan 6-0, 6-0 in just 46 minutes; fifth-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria beat Kathy Rinaldi 6-1, 6-3; sixth-seeded Hana Mandlikova of Australia eliminated Kate Gompert 6-4, 6-2.

In first-round matches Tuesday, ninth-seeded Gigi Fernandez beat Jana Pospisilova of Czechoslovakia, 6-1, 6-3;

Favourites Kuwait, Iraq draw

KUWAIT (AP) — Favourites Kuwait and Iraq drew 1-1 Wednesday before a near capacity crowd at Peace and Friendship Stadium in the 10th Gulf Cup soccer championship.

Both sides were in the second half, with Kuwait tipping the ball into its own net for the Iraqi point.

Expectations for the match ran high, but it only picked up tempo in the second half after Kuwait pulled ahead 1-0 lead in the 48th minute.

Midfielder Wajid Suleiman headed home a cross by Mayed Haddad to send about 15,000 Kuwait supporters into a frenzy. Some three to four thousand Iraqi fans, many who flew or drove into Kuwait for the occasion, chanted with equal fervor after Kuwaiti defender Adil Othman scored against Kuwait in the 69th minute.

Iraq is holding the Gulf Cup title for the third time and Kuwait has captured it six times in the past.

Iraqi coach Anwar Hisham brought in Natiq Hasim in the midfield in the 53rd minute, which gave the three-time Gulf Cup champions an upper hand.

Earlier, the Kuwaitis dominated because of their better linkage. The Iraqi coach said that the game was the best so far in the tournament. "Natiq changed the trend in our favour," the Iraqi coach said.

Kuwait's Brazilian coach Luis Felipe also praised the standard of the game. "I didn't ask my boys to go on the defence after the goal," he said. "It was players decision and taken following the situation on the pitch."

The 10th Gulf Cup championship opened Feb. 20 and continues to March 9. The event is held every two years, with competing teams from the seven

Arah countries of the Gulf — the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia pulled out this year to protest the emblem, featuring two historical horses who helped repulse a Saudi attack on Kuwait in the 1920s.

The matches are classified as exhibition play by the International Football Association (FIFA), but the Gulf Cup is a prestigious event for the participants with soccer the most favoured sport in the region.

The participation of the U.A.F. a contender for the 24-nation World Cup finals in June, has created no ripples. The U.A.F. were brought to a draw in a last minute playing by both Oman and Qatar.

Kuwait now leads with four points, but second placed Iraq have played one game less. On Thursday, Bahrain takes on Oman.

Chang knocked out in 2nd round

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Glenn Layendecker proved too powerful for Michael Chang Tuesday night, spoiling the French Open champion's return to singles competition with a 6-4, 6-4 victory in the second round of the Volvo Indoor tennis tournament.

Chang, who has been sidelined for the past nine weeks because of a hip injury, started strongly, but his game became erratic midway through the opening set.

"I thought my ground strokes just weren't as penetrating as they usually are," said Chang.

"The mental part (of my game) was missing a little bit. I think by being out so long, the mental part just wasn't there," said Chang, ranked number seven in the world and the number two seed at Memphis.

In the first match of the night session, Finland's Veli Paloheimo abandoned the baseline and rushed his way to a 7-6 (7-5), 6-3 upset of eighth-seeded Mikael Pernfors.

Earlier Tuesday, Danie Visser, who struggled through three qualifying matches to make the tournament field, continued his success Tuesday by beating Mark Kratzmann in straight sets.

In other first-round matches Tuesday, Gary Muller defeated Pieter Aldrich 7-6 (7-5), 6-3; Ken Flach downed Argentina's Horacio de la Pena 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7-5); and Michael Stich of West Germany topped Grant Connell of Canada 4-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-4.

Chang, 18, won the first three games of the second set against Layendecker, but then lost the opportunity to gain control as he squandered five break points before Layendecker, unseeded and ranked 77th, finally held serve.

Chang was broken himself in the fifth game as Layendecker hit a backhand winner at the net and then let two break points slip away.



Michael Chang away in the sixth game, but Layendecker held his serve and two unforced errors by Chang. Layendecker broke Chang the ninth game with a strong forehand from his own baseline. In the 10th game, Chang's forehand from the baseline hit the net at match point and then fell wide. "I served well tonight and have been close to breaking through (for a major win)," Layendecker said. "Things finally fell my way."

Patterson back to scene of Olympic triumph

HELSINKI, Finland (AP) — A storm of applause and appreciation swept down from the terraces, almost as it happened nearly 38 years ago when a 17-year-old quicksilver boxer named Floyd Patterson was the centre of attention in the old Exhibition Hall in Helsinki.

Very convincingly, by a knockout in the first round, the youngster from New York won the Olympic middleweight gold medal. From there, he went onto a lucrative professional career, reaching the pinnacle in 1956 when he won the world heavyweight title.

On Monday night, Patterson visited the site of his Olympic victory for the first time since the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. He didn't remember how the arena looked inside. Today, the municipality run Toole Sport Hall, visibly worn by time, provides citizens with facilities for a host of sports, including boxing. There are a few punching bags hanging around, almost hidden.

Boxing events are now held in a smaller annex, mainly used as a basketball arena. Patterson and legman Johansson of Sweden, opponents in three memorable heavyweight title fights from 1959

to 1961, were honorary guests at the Finnish boxing championship finals Monday night.

Johansson got his share of the applause Monday night, a sharp departure from his Olympic experience in 1952, when he was booed out from the ring by a hostile crowd after being disqualified for passivity in the heavyweight final against Ed Sanders of the United States.

Looking at that match today, Johansson's style wasn't much different from that of Muhammad Ali — shuffle away and wait for a chance to counterpunch.

Much later, and thanks to a Finnish initiative, Johansson got his Olympic silver medal. On Monday night, he got the ap-

plause to go with it.

Patterson was the smaller man in the title series against Johansson and certainly is so today. He weighs in at a trim 88 kilograms, thanks to regular workouts and to classes in which he teaches boxing to youngsters — "but above all I eat only when I'm hungry."

Johansson, a beefy man in his athletic prime, tips the scales today at about 145 kilograms. Patterson was guided through the pro ranks by Gus D'Amato, the man who propelled Mike Tyson on the road to the heavyweight title.

Tyson was dethroned when Buster Douglas knocked him out in the 10th round of their fight.

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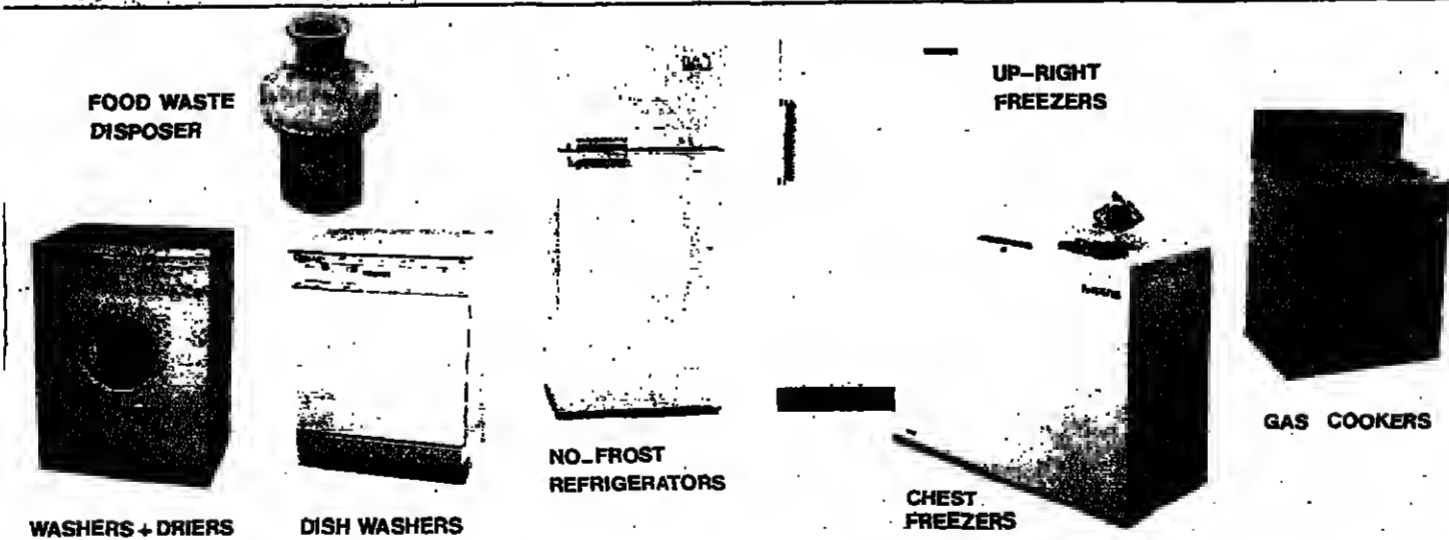
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Performances: 3:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15

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لقد كنت في الحب

Chamorro, Ortega urge guerrillas to disband

MANAGUA (R) — Nicaraguan President-Elect Violeta Chamorro has called on the U.S.-backed contra rebels to disband and return home, hours after defeated President Daniel Ortega made their demobilisation a condition for a peaceful transfer of power.

"The causes of the civil war in Nicaragua have disappeared," Chamorro declared Tuesday night in a radio address.

"There is no reason for more war. Therefore, those who took up arms must now get down their guns and return peacefully to Nicaragua... to work for the reconstruction of our fatherland," she said.

Chamorro said the rebels, thousands of whom are camped out in Honduras, must respect the terms of a Central American peace agreement signed by Ortega and four other presidents.

Announcing that the president of Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council had formally named her president-elect Tuesday, Chamorro said the Sandinista Party would be able to play a major role in the political life of Nicaragua after handing over power.

"I want to... reaffirm my pledge to respect the will of the majority of 40 per cent of our people which voted for the Sandinista National Liberation Front," she said. "I wish to be president of all Nicaraguans."

In general elections Sunday, Chamorro won 55.2 per cent against Ortega's 40.8.

Earlier in the day, in a speech diplomats described as carefully balanced to satisfy party militants without giving back on his promise to respect the vote, Ortega warned his conservative successor not to roll back a decade of

leftwing reforms or dismantle the Sandinista army.

After a crucial meeting Tuesday between the policy-making Sandinista Directorate and 1,500 key party officials, Ortega declared his defeated party was ready to play by democratic rules and work for peace and stability in Nicaragua.

"We will govern from below," he said, referring to the Sandinistas' impending role as an opposition party.

He made the disbanding of the contra army a condition for a transition of government on April 25, the date on which the Sandinistas are due to hand over power under the constitution.

"The Sandinista National Liberation Front demands the immediate demobilisation... of the counter-revolution so that there can be a peaceful and orderly transition of government," Ortega told 10,000 cheering supporters.

The insurgents should have disbanded by Dec. 5 under the terms of the Central American peace accord. But they ignored the deadline and one of their top commanders said Monday they would keep their weapons until the Sandinistas handed over power.

Ortega said the impending handover "does not in any way mean the end of the (Sandinista) revolution."

Ortega said land reform and

the nationalisation of foreign trade, Nicaragua's banks and its natural resources were "irreversible and fundamental achievements" of 11 years of leftwing government here.

After toppling U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979, the Sandinistas broke up large landholdings. Over the past decade, more than 140,000 peasant families were given title to plots.

The banking system and foreign commerce were also nationalised in 1979, when the Sandinistas began building up a public sector foreign economists describe as bloated and inefficient. Ortega said the Sandinistas would make sure no public sector employee would lose his job as a result of the government transition.

And he warned his successors not to try to dismantle the army, police and security forces.

"The Sandinista National Liberation Front will defend the professionalism and integrity of the popular Sandinista army and the Ministry of Interior within the framework of the political constitution," he said.

In Washington, a top State Department official said Tuesday that a key element in the free and fair elections in Nicaragua was the Soviet Union's cooperation with the United States in the Central American peace process.

"We believe that the Soviet Union played a constructive role in encouraging the Sandinista government to hold these elections," the official told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said close U.S.-Soviet cooperation in Central America over the last year was unprecedented in the history of



Map of Central America showing Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador.

the superpower relationship. Meanwhile the White House and Congress, long at odds over Nicaragua policy, now concur on the need for U.S. aid to help president-elect Violeta Chamorro rebuild an economy ravaged by a decade of conflict and a U.S. economic boycott.

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Tuesday that President George Bush would soon end the U.S. economic sanctions in response to Chamorro's defeat of President Daniel Ortega's leftist Sandinista government in elections Sunday.

Fitzwater said Bush's administration would also develop a significant and meaningful aid package to help rebuild Nicaragua's economy.

"The U.S. commitment is strong and enduring. We will develop an aid package for Nicaragua that will be significant and meaningful. The democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people deserve our support, and they will have it," the White House official said.

Key congressional leaders offered similar words of economic aid to bolster Chamorro's incoming government.

"We do have an obligation to see democracy work there," Senator Alan Cranston, the second-highest ranking Democrat in the Senate, told reporters Tuesday after a White House meeting between the Republican President and congressional leaders of both parties.

Japan's new government takes office

TOKYO (R) — Japan's new government took office Wednesday after Premier Toshiki Kaifu fought off pressure from ruling party power-brokers to include scandal-ridden politicians in his new cabinet.

The 21-member government list, unveiled after late-night wrangling, included two key holdovers, Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama.

The absence of other much-touted names showed Kaifu, 59, had unexpectedly managed to veto politicians tainted by the Lockheed and recruit corruption scandals.

But political analysts said this did not mean the boyish-looking prime minister, a stepgap choice for the job last August, had wrested control of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) from the political barons who have kept it in power for nearly 35 years.

Tuesday's public show of resistance could even prove to be Kaifu's last hurrah, the analysts said.

The prime minister spearheaded the LDP's general election triumph ten days ago and was rewarded Tuesday with another lease on the top job, but he remains critically weak in the party's inner councils.

Opposition party critics Wednesday ridiculed the idea that Kaifu had won freedom to choose his own team.

They said it was clear that while Kaifu may have vetoed several names, the faction chiefs had already carried up the cabinet seats between them.

Most Japanese analysts believe it is only a matter of time before the LDP hands power to this unaccustomed spark of independence and restore internal order.

Former Foreign Minister Shinro Abe, a major faction leader tarred with the recruit brush last year, is generally seen as the leading candidate to take over as premier.

After the Feb. 18 elections, when recruit-linked candidates claimed to have been "washed clean" by winning voter support, many Western commentators were scathing about a system which enables a corruption-plagued party to win 12 straight terms.

One French newspaper called Japan "a political dwarf".

Kaifu Wednesday denied that re-election guaranteed absolution for legislators implicated in wrongdoing.

"We have to retain the trust of the people, so we must continue with political reform," he told a news conference.

Having failed to defeat the LDP this month in a lacklustre, divided campaign, the opposition parties Wednesday unanimously poured scorn on Kaifu's second cabinet line-up.

Prague more in charge of fate

PRAGUE (R) — With Soviet troops on their way home, Czechoslovakia has greater control over its own destiny than for more than 50 years, President Václav Havel said Wednesday.

"We are today a country that is truly sovereign, independent and respected and need not be afraid of any immediate threat," Havel told a news conference.

"We need not be afraid we will be forced to capitulate in some matter, as we have done so often in the past."

Havel returned Tuesday from Moscow where an agreement was signed for the 73,500 Soviet soldiers in Czechoslovakia since the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion to pull out.

The withdrawal began Monday and will last until next year.

"Since Munich, we have not been as sovereign as we are now," Havel said, adding as a qualification that there were a "number of links from the past that can't be broken overnight."

In September 1938, Czechoslovakia was forced at the four-

power Munich conference between Britain, France, Germany and Italy to hand over territory claimed by Nazi Germany. Hitler nonetheless invaded Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939 and rode in triumph through Prague.

Havel, whose first trip abroad as president last month included a symbolic visit to Munich, will greet West German President Richard von Weizsäcker in Prague on the 51st anniversary of the invasion.

"I invented this date myself because it seemed very appropriate. I like symbols in politics," Havel said.

"Hitler came here as a messenger of war and violence and brought horrors for the whole world... Mr. von Weizsäcker is a man of peace, a philosopher, a scholar."

Havel said the West German president's visit "should be the end of all we have experienced in the past, the signal that we are beginning to live with this important neighbour of ours in entirely new relations."

Lawyers file petition for Enrile release

MANILA (AP) — Attorneys for Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile asked the supreme court Wednesday to free the opposition lawmaker, arrested on "rebellion with murder" charges in connection with last December's failed coup.

Enrile, who played a key role in bringing President Corason Aquino to power, was held overnight at the National Bureau of Investigation and transferred early Wednesday to the city's northern police district headquarters in suburban Quezon City.

The opposition accused Aquino of trying to stifle dissent. Military dissidents claimed the arrest of one of the administration's sharpest critics was a prelude to martial law.

In a petition filed Wednesday, Enrile's law partner, Renato Cayetano, claimed the arrest was illegal and violated the senator's rights. He asked the court to free him.

Court officials said no hearing had been scheduled.

Enrile, among seven people indicted Tuesday, denied any role in the coup attempt from Dec. 1-9, in which at least 113 people were killed and more than 600 wounded.

He is the most prominent figure charged in any of the six coup attempts since Aquino was swept to power in February 1986 by the "people power" uprising that drove the late President Ferdinand Marcos into exile.

Enrile was defence minister under Marcos, but turned against him and led the military mutiny that prompted the uprising. He kept the post under Aquino, but he fired him in November 1986 after a coup attempt by his followers.

Some units have been officially taken off active duty to fill gaps in the country's industry, but thousands of soldiers have simply quit on their own initiative, NATO sources say.

"The East German army has stopped functioning as a military machine," said one senior NATO official with access to detailed intelligence reports. "It is amazing — unlike anything else in Eastern Europe."

The Western alliance estimated that the National People's Army (NPA), which had 173,000 men until the Berlin Wall came down last November and was rigidly tied to Communist ideology, has now shrunk by almost half to around 90,000.

"Soldiers are simply not turning up for work, some have emigrated to the West, others have gone to take jobs elsewhere in the country. A lot of them feel the

Cambodian rebels claim capture of 10 Vietnamese soldiers

BANGKOK (R) — Khmer Rouge guerrillas said Wednesday they had captured 10 Vietnamese soldiers, saying this proved Hanoi was still directly involved in the Cambodian war.

Khmer Rouge radio broadcast what it said was the voice of a Vietnamese officer.

Giving his name as Major Nguyen Young Tan, the officer said he left Cambodia in a Vietnamese pull-out last September and was sent back three months later.

Hanoi had hoped the withdrawal — still to be independently verified — would help end years of isolation from the West. The United States and many other governments said Vietnam illegally occupied Cambodia after invading in December 1978 to oust the fanatical Khmer Rouge regime. They have refused to recognise the Phnom Penh government on the grounds it was installed by Hanoi.

Many Western politicians expressed fears the Khmer Rouge could sweep back into power after the weakened Phnom Penh army was left to fight on its own.

The guerrillas went on the offensive and extended the meagre territory they held. Government troops hit back last week, retaking some areas of northwest Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge and their

non-Communist allies said hundreds of Vietnamese took part in the assault. They described them as mercenaries dressed in Cambodian uniforms.

A Khmer Rouge statement said they were used as reinforcements or "served as backbones of various units" of the Phnom Penh government.

It said nearly 20,000 Vietnamese troops returned to Cambodia in the three months following the pull-out and 1,200 more entered in February.

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The Khmer Rouge and their

An Australian proposal for the United Nations to play a dominant role in ending Cambodia's 11 years of war appeared to have gained some ground at peace talks in Jakarta Wednesday.

The Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), one of three guerrilla factions pitted against the Hanoi-backed Phnom Penh government, said it would "save a decision on a U.N. role to Indonesia and France, co-chairmen of the Jakarta peace talks."

"We, the KPNLF, put our trust in the co-chairman on the role of the U.N.... whatever they want to do to enhance the role of the U.N. to bring peace to Cambodia," a spokesman told Reuters.

He was speaking on the last day of the informal talks which have centered on the U.N. effectively taking charge in Cambodia until elections can be held.

"We have given everything to the U.N.... whatever they want to do to enhance the role of the U.N. to bring peace to Cambodia," a spokesman told Reuters.

The KPNLF decision appeared to be the first move by the guerrillas to concede on the issue of letting the U.N. and the co-chairmen decide to extent of the world body's role.

Australian delegates attending the three-day talks said the KPNLF had effectively given up its longstanding demand that the four warring factions form an interim administration after a settlement.

100 die in Indian election violence

PATNA, India (R) — At least 100 people were killed in a wave of election violence across Bihar, reports from around the volatile north Indian state said Wednesday.

The state government in the capital Patna said it could confirm only 38 deaths in Tuesday's elections to the state assembly but that the toll would rise with official reports still awaited from many areas.

Journalists and politicians around the state said 100 were killed, most in violence between rival party supporters fighting for control of polling booths.

There was scattered violence in some of the other seven states that voted for their assemblies Tuesday, but nothing on the scale of that in Bihar.

Police said rival supporters used guns and bombs against each other. Two election officials and two candidates from former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party were arrested on charges of attempted rigging, they added.

At least 12 people were killed in Bihar during an election campaign that was unusually passionate following a Congress defeat, for only the second time since independence from Britain in 1947, in national elections last

November.

The state elections were the first major test of popularity for the three-month-old government of Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh and seen widely as crucial to the political future of arch-rival Rajiv Gandhi.

Most political analysts and an opinion poll predicted embarrassing defeats in all eight states for Congress, which was routed in November in the Hindi-speaking north that dominates Indian politics.

The one state where analysts thought Congress might do better than expected was the impoverished state of Bihar, where murder is common and crime often mingles with politics.

The government had flooded the state with thousands of extra security men to prevent a repetition of the violence in the general elections, the nation's bloodiest in which over 100 people were killed.

If the predictions of defeats proved accurate for Congress, which ruled all eight states that voted Tuesday, Gandhi's political future would be in doubt, political analysts said.

There is widespread grumbling within Congress over Gandhi's leadership and the failure to

change his style following the general election defeat.

Insiders complain that Gandhi is still very difficult to get to meet, that he remains out of touch with people and that he has not overhauled a party machinery in dire need of change.

Poor morale at grassroots level and in-fighting at the top were significant factors in the party's performance last November.

Many analysts say they expect moves to dump Gandhi if he has led the party to more defeats in the state elections.

The big winner was expected to be the rightwing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which won 58 parliamentary seats in November, up from just two, and is crucial to Singh's survival.

It supports his government from outside, along with ideological enemies from Marxist parties, despite profound policy differences with the trenchantly secular Singh.

Very early trends showed the BJP leading in the Hindi-belt states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and Singh's Janata Dal ahead in Orissa in the east and Gujarat in the west.

Only in the small southern territory of Pondicherry was Congress in front.

Lithuanians seek to stall Moscow

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Separatists in Soviet Lithuania aim to head off a possible Moscow veto on independence by convening a meeting of their new parliament first.

A second round of voting in elections originally set for March 10 has been brought forward by a week in 20 districts, the vice-chairman of the electoral commission, Vaclovas Litvinas, said Wednesday.

This enables parliament to meet next week in advance of a session of the Soviet Union's supreme legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies, which is expected to give President Mikhail Gorbachev new powers that could be used to block moves to independence.

In the first multi-party poll in Soviet history last Saturday, candidates backed by the pro-independence Sajudis movement swept the board in the first round of elections to the Lithuanian parliament.

But in 51 districts no single

candidate won an outright majority, forcing a runoff. Parliament can be convened only after two-thirds of all deputies are elected.

Algimantas Cekulius, a Sajudis deputy, said: "The congress will confirm Gorbachev as president when it meets on March 12, giving him new powers including the power to declare a state of emergency."

Cekulius predicted parliament would meet a few days after the second round.

Land bill approved

The Soviet legislature on Wednesday approved a landmark bill that would allow citizens to acquire land and bequeath it to their children for the first time since peasants were stripped of their farms in the 1930s.

But the law stops short of legalising full private ownership of property by strictly forbidding the sale of land. Under the new

law, plots only can be leased and lease prices will be set by the state.

The measure is one of a package designed to give force of law to the economic and social reforms championed by Gorbachev. The official news agency TASS called it "a major legal document of Soviet economic reform."

State ownership of land, enshrined in the Soviet constitution, has been a cornerstone of Soviet communism since the 1917 revolution. But Soviet reformers and economists have called repeatedly for allowing private ownership as a way of spurring economic growth in the troubled country.

By altering the constitution and allowing peasants working on collective or state farms to acquire plots and turn it into their own hereditary property, the Kremlin leadership hopes to raise farm productivity, which is notoriously low on collective and state-owned farms.

Until the Berlin Wall fell, East Germany's armed forces were among the most disciplined, loyal, well-equipped and thoroughly trained in the Warsaw Pact.

The two German states are the frontline states for both blocs and among the most heavily militarised areas in the world.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Space shuttle launched after delays

CAPE CANAVERAL (R) — After five postponements due to bad weather, illness and a computer problem, the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis finally thundered into space on a secret mission Wednesday with a crew of five military officers. The shuttle, reported to be carrying a spy satellite that would help check Soviet compliance with arms control treaties, took off at 2.30 a.m. (0750 GMT). "It looked good," said U.S. Air Force spokesman Captain Marty Hauser after the launch, the fourth night lift-off in 34 shuttle flights. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Defence Department planned to impose a news blackout on the mission until about one hour before it is scheduled to land. Previous military missions have lasted about four days. Launch officials expressed relief at the successful launch after the delays which cost NASA about \$3 million.

Exxon indicted over Alaska oil spill

WASHINGTON (R) — A federal grand jury in Alaska indicted Exxon Corp and its shipping subsidiary on five criminal charges in connection with last year's Alaskan oil spill, the worst in U.S. history. The indictment, announced in Washington by Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, means Exxon could face fines of at least \$640 million if convicted on all charges. The indictment was returned after lengthy negotiations between the Justice Department and the oil giant over a possible plea bargain collapsed. The supertanker Exxon Valdez ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound on March 24, 1989, spilling 11 million gallons (42 million litres) of oil. Exxon has already spent more than \$2 billion to clean up the spill that destroyed some 1,600 kilometres of coastline and killed thousands of animals.

U.S., EC pledge closer ties

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States and the European Community, confronted by an earthquake of change in Eastern Europe, have agreed to build up a much closer political relationship with twice-yearly summits. President George Bush, clearly eager to maintain U.S. influence in a fast-changing Europe, signalled a new era in Washington's dealings with the 12-nation Community after talks with Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey. "The United States will remain a European power," Bush said after pledging to wage twice-yearly summits with the European leader currently heading the 12-nation Community. The post rotates every six months. Ireland is the present EC president and Haughey said after his turning-point talks with Bush: "We are building a broader bridge across the Atlantic." The two also agreed Tuesday that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker would stage talks every six months with the 12 EC foreign ministers.

COLUMN 8

Rio carnival ends

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Rio has ended its annual carnival on a high note despite an increase in the number of murders during the glittering extravaganza. The sprawling city, burdened by AIDS, hyperinflation and violent crime, forgot its problems in a crescendo of bands and dazzling displays. But local newspapers reported 84 murders in greater Rio between Saturday and Monday afternoon — up from the 37 last year during the full five days of carnival. Another young man died when a float he was pushing hit an overhead cable. The two-day parade wound up early Tuesday as the last eight samba schools made their way down the Sambadrome on elaborate floats, decked in flamboyant costumes. A ban by the League of Samba Schools on total nudity this year was not exactly defied, but hundreds of scantily-clad women swayed and spun to the hypnotic beat of the samba drums along the route. Most of the 90,000 spectators remained on their feet throughout the 12-hour marathon. Floats of Indians, standing 13 metres high, bikini-clad girls emerging from giant bananas and skulls caught in a huge spider web were some of the most striking images of the parade. The spectacular display contrasted starkly with the often harsh reality of life in Rio. But inside the Sambadrome, spectators and participants alike thought only of having a good time. "When I samba I forget everything. I forget my problems. I forget Brazil's problems," said Mauricio Dias, a member of the Santa Cruz Samba School.

\$42,500 tossed in the trash

NEWPORT BEACH, California (AP) — It is not every day that a bank tosses \$42,500 into the trash — even in this trendy community. "We're sort of embarrassed," Great American Bank spokesman Brian Luscomb said, a day after the windfall was recovered from a municipal trash truck that had hauled it away. "It was an accident and we're really not commenting much beyond that," said Luscomb, who added that a bank employee whose name was not released put the money in the wrong container. When the garbage truck got to the dump, officials there had been warned about the missing cash, and they had the driver take his load to a city yard instead. The garbage was dumped there and municipal employees dug through the trash until they found the cash. The city's trash collectors must try to track down the owners of expensive items but can keep lesser ones, said General Services Director David Niederhaus.

Beauty contestants upset over alleged pre-picking of winner

TEL AVIV (AP) — Contestants in Israel's national beauty pageant were in tears Tuesday after a daily newspaper named a winner allegedly picked by the judges ahead of the final event. The Hadashot newspaper wrote that the 11-judge panel had chosen 18-year-old Irena Kruglik, a Soviet immigrant, as Israel's new beauty queen after interviewing the 20 candidates Saturday. The pageant is sponsored by the mass circulation newspaper Yediot Ahronot, one of Hadashot's competitors. Pageant organiser Rachel Givon denied the Hadashot story, saying that the judges would make their decision only after final evening gown and bathing suit competitions Tuesday night in Tel Aviv.

Global weather (major world cities)

| | MIN. | MAX. | Weather |
|--------------|------|------|-------------|
| AMSTERDAM | 04 | 26 | 04 Cloudy |
| ATHENS | 06 | 15 | 04 Rain |
| BAGHDAD | 14 | 22 | 02 Clear |
| BANGKOK | 26 | 39 | 01 Clear |
| BUENOS AIRES | 16 | 24 | 01 Cloudy |
| CAIRO | 11 | 24 | 04 Clear |
| CHICAGO | -03 | 07 | 05 Clear |
| COPENHAGEN | 02 | 06 | 01 Cloudy |
| FRANKFURT | 04 | 09 | 01 Clear |
| GENEVA | 06 | 15 | 05 Rain |
| HONG KONG | 13 | 24 | 01 Cloudy |
| ISTANBUL | 04 | 18 | 01 Rain |
| LONDON | 05 | 10 | 02 Cloudy |
| LOS ANGELES | 11 | 21 | 01 Clear |
| MADRID | 06 | 20 | 04 Clear |
| MECCA | 16 | 26 | 04 Clear |
| MONTREAL | -12 | 04 | 04 Snow |
| MOSCOW | -07 | 04 | 07 Cloudy |
| NEW DELHI | 12 | 25 | 01 Cloudy |
| NEW YORK | -01 | 02 | 02 Clear |
| PARIS | 07 | 15 | 02 Clear |
| ROME | 00 | 18 | 01 Clear |
| SYDNEY | 19 | 24 | 01 Cloudy |
| TOKYO | 06 | 43 | 01 52 Clear |
| VIENNA | 03 | 16 | 04 Cloudy |